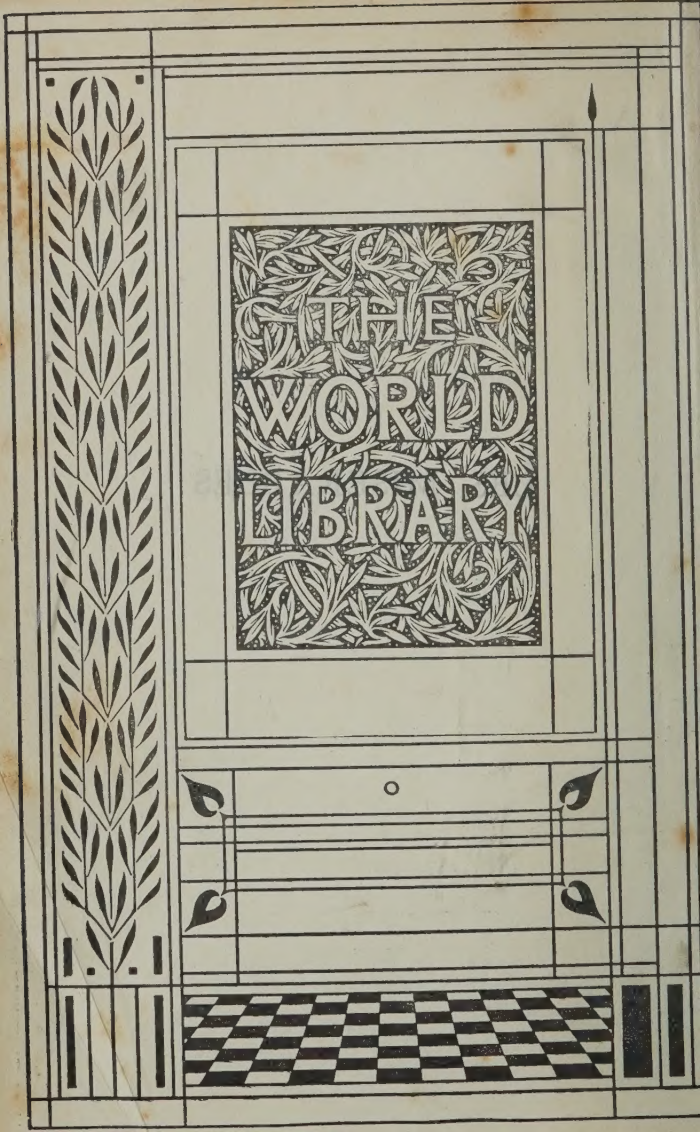




LES MISÉRABLES


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LES MISÉRABLES

CHAPTER I

In 1815 M. Charles François Bienvenu Myriel was Bishop of D——. He was a man of about seventy-five years of age, and had held the see of D—— since 1806. He was the son of a councillor of the Aix Parliament. It was said that his father, who intended that he should be his successor, married him at the age of eighteen or twenty, according to a not uncommon custom in parliamentary families. Charles Myriel, in spite of this marriage (so people said), had been the cause of much tattle. He was well built, though of short stature elegant, graceful, and witty; and the earlier part of his life was devoted to the world and to gallantry. The Revolution came, events hurried on, and the parliamentary families, decimated and hunted down, became dispersed. M. Charles Myriel emigrated to Italy in the early part of the Revolution, and his wife, who had been long suffering from a chest complaint, died there, leaving no children. What next took place in M. Myriel's destiny? No one could have answered this question; all that was known was that when he returned from Italy he was a priest.

In 1804 M. Myriel was Curé of B—— (Brignolles). He was already aged, and lived in great retirement. He had arrived at D——, accompanied by an old maid, Mlle Baptistine, who was his sister, and ten years younger than himself. Their only servant was a female of the same age as Mademoiselle, of the name of Madame Magloire, who, after having been the servant of M. le Curé, now assumed the double title of waiting-woman to Mademoiselle, and housekeeper to Monseigneur. Mlle Baptistine was a tall, pale, slim, gentle person; the ideal of what the word "respectable" expresses, for it seems necessary for a woman to be a mother in order to be venerable. She had never been pretty, but her whole life, which had been but a succession of pious works,

had eventually cast over her a species of brightness, and in growing older she had acquired what may be called the beauty of goodness. What had been thinness in her youth had become in her maturity transparency, and through this transparency the angel could be seen. Madame Magloire was a fair, plump, busy little body, always short of breath,—in the first place, through her activity, and, secondly, in consequence of an asthma.

On his arrival M. Myriel was installed in his episcopal palace with all the honours allotted by the imperial decrees, which classify the Bishop immediately after a Major-General. The Mayor and the President paid him the first visit, and he on his side paid the first visit to the General and the Prefect. When the installation was ended the town waited to see its bishop at work.

The Episcopal Palace of D—— was a spacious, handsome mansion, built at the beginning of the last century. The hospital was a small single-storeyed house with a little garden. Three days after his arrival the Bishop visited it, and seeing how confined the wards were, he at once resolved to instal the patients in the palace and himself in the hospital.

M. Myriel had no property, as his family had been ruined by the Revolution. His sister had an annuity of 500 francs, which had sufficed at the curacy for personal expenses. M. Myriel, as Bishop, received from the State 15,000 francs a year, the employment of which sum he once for all settled in the following way. We copy here a note in his own handwriting.

"THE REGULATION OF MY HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES.

"For the little Seminary, 1500 frcs. Congregation of the Mission, 100 frcs. The Lazarists of Montdidier, 100 frcs. Seminary of Foreign Missions at Paris, 200 frcs. Congregation of the Holy Ghost, 150 frcs. Religious establishments in the Holy Land, 100 frcs. Societies of Maternal Charity, 300 frcs. Additional for the one at Arles, 50 frcs. Works for improvement of prisons, 400 frcs. Relief and deliverance of prisoners, 500 frcs. For liberation of fathers imprisoned for debt, 1000 frcs. Addition to the salary of poor schoolmasters in the diocese, 2000 frcs. Distribution of grain in the Upper Alps, 100 frcs. Ladies' Society for gratuitous

instruction of poor girls at D——, Manosque, and Sisteron, 1500 frcs. For the poor, 6000 frcs. Personal expenses, 1000 frcs.—Total, 15,000 frcs."

During the whole time he held the see of D——, M. Myriel made no change in this arrangement. He called this, as we see, regulating his household expenses. The arrangement was accepted with a smile by Mlle Baptistine, for that sainted woman regarded M. Myriel at once as her brother and her bishop; her friend according to nature, her superior according to the Church. She loved and venerated him in the simplest way. When he spoke she bowed, when he acted she assented. The servant alone, Madame Magloire, murmured a little. The Bishop, it will have been noticed, only reserved 1000 francs, and on this sum, with Mlle Baptistine's pension, these two old women and old man lived. And when a village curé came to D——, the Bishop managed to regale him, thanks to the strict economy of Madame Magloire and the sensible management of Mlle Baptistine.

Such was M. Myriel's budget. As for the accidental receipts, such as fees for bans, christenings, consecrating churches or chapels, marriages, etc., the Bishop collected them from the rich with so much the more eagerness because he distributed them to the poor. In a short time the monetary offerings became augmented. The Bishop in less than a year became the treasurer of all charity and the cashier of all distress. Considerable sums passed through his hands, but nothing could induce him to make any change in his mode of life, or add the slightest superfluity to his expenditure.

The Bishop, who had converted even his coach into alms, did not the less make his visitations. The diocese of D—— is fatiguing; there are few plains and many mountains, and hardly any roads: twenty-two curacies, forty-one vicarages, and two hundred and eighty-five chapels of ease. It was a task to visit all these, but the Bishop managed it. He went on foot when the place was near, in a calash when it was in the plain, and in a *cacolet* when it was in the mountains. The two old females generally accompanied him, but when the journey was too wearying for them he went alone.

One day he arrived at Senez, which is an old Episcopal town, mounted on a donkey. The Mayor of the city came to receive him at the door of the Bishop's Palace, and saw him

dismount with scandalized eyes. A few cits were laughing round him. " M. Mayor and gentlemen," the Bishop said, " I see what it is that scandalizes you. You consider it great pride for a poor priest to ride an animal which our Saviour once upon a time bestrode. I did so through necessity, I assure you, and not through vanity."

The Bishop's conversation was affable and lively. He condescended to the level of the two females who spent their life near him, and when he laughed it was a schoolboy's laugh. Madame Magloire was fond of calling him " Your Grandeur." One day he rose from his easy chair and went to fetch a book from his library : as it was on one of the top shelves, and as the Bishop was short, he could not reach it. " Madame Magloire," he said, " bring me a chair, for my Grandeur does not rise to that shelf."

He displayed at times a gentle raillery, which nearly always contained a serious meaning. During one Lent a young vicar came to D—— and preached at the cathedral. He was rather eloquent, and the subject of his sermon was charity. He invited the rich to give to the needy in order to escape hell, which he painted in the most frightful way he could, and reach paradise, which he made desirable and charming. There was among the congregation a rich, retired merchant, somewhat of a ursurer, who had acquired £80,000 by manufacturing coarse cloths, serges, and caddis. In his whole lifetime M. Géborand had never given alms to a beggar, but after this sermon it was remarked that he gave every Sunday a halfpenny to the old women begging at the cathedral gate. There were six of them to share it. One day the Bishop saw him bestowing his charity, and said to his sister, with a smile, " Look at M. Géborand buying a halfpennyworth of paradise."

A Provençal by birth, he easily accustomed himself to all the dialects of the South : this greatly pleased the people, and had done no little in securing him admission to all minds. He was, as it were, at home in the hut and on the mountain. He could say the grandest things in the most vulgar idioms, and as he spoke all languages he entered all hearts. However, he was the same to people of fashion as to the lower classes.

He had a strange manner peculiarly his own, of judging

things. I suspect that he obtained it from the Gospels. He one day heard in a drawing-room the story of a trial which was shortly to take place. A wretched man, through love of a woman and a child he had by her, having exhausted his resources, coined false money, which at that period was an offence punished by death. The woman was arrested while issuing the first false piece manufactured by the man. She was detained, but there was no proof against her. She alone could charge her lover and ruin him by confessing. She denied. They pressed her, but she adhered to her denial. Upon this, the Royal Procureur had an idea: he feigned infidelity on the lover's part, and contrived, by cleverly presenting the woman with fragments of letters, to persuade her that she had a rival, and that the man was deceiving her. Then, exasperated by jealousy, she denounced her lover, confessed everything, proved everything. The man was ruined, and would shortly be tried with his accomplice at Aix. The story was told, and everybody was delighted at the magistrate's cleverness. By bringing jealousy into play he brought out the truth through passion, and obtained justice through revenge. The Bishop listened to all this in silence, and when it was ended he asked: "Where will this man and woman be tried?" "At the assizes." Then he continued, "And where will the Royal Procureur be tried?"

M. Myriel might be called at any hour to the bed-side of the sick and the dying. He was not ignorant that his greatest duty and greatest labour lay there. Widowed or orphaned families had no occasion to send for him, for he came of himself. He had the art of sitting down and holding his tongue for hours by the side of a man who had lost the wife he loved, or of a mother bereaved of her child. As he knew the time to be silent, he also knew the time to speak. What an admirable consoler he was! he did not try to efface grief by oblivion, but to aggrandize and dignify it by hope. He would say: "Take care of the way in which you turn to the dead. Do not think of that which perishes. Look fixedly, and you will perceive the living light of your beloved dead in heaven." He knew that belief is healthy, and he sought to counsel and calm the desperate man by pointing out to him the resigned man, and to transform the grief that gazes at a grave by showing it the grief that looks at a star.

M. Myriel's domestic life was full of the same thoughts as his public life. To one capable of inspecting it closely, the voluntary poverty in which the Bishop lived would have been a solemn and charming spectacle. Like all old men, and like most thinkers, he slept little, but that short sleep was deep. In the morning he remained in contemplation for an hour, and then read mass either at the cathedral or in his house. Mass over, he breakfasted on rye bread dipped in the milk of his own cows.

The time which the afflicted, the sick, and the needy left him he gave to work. Sometimes he hoed in his garden, at others he read and wrote. He had only one name for both sorts of labour, he called them gardening. "The mind is a garden," he would say.

Toward mid-day, when the weather was fine, he went out and walked in the country or the town, frequently entering the cottages. He could be seen walking alone in deep thought, looking down, leaning on his long cane, dressed in his violet wadded and warm great-coat, with his violet stockings thrust into clumsy shoes, and wearing his flat hat, through each corner of which were passed three golden acorns as tassels. It was a festival wherever he appeared, it seemed as if his passing had something warming and luminous about it; old men and children came to the door to greet the Bishop as they did the sun. He blessed them and they blessed him, and his house was pointed out to anybody who was in want of anything.

The house the Bishop resided in consisted of a ground floor and one above it, three rooms on the ground, three bedrooms on the first floor, and above them a store-room. Behind the house was a quarter of an acre of garden. The two females occupied the first floor, and the Bishop lodged below. The first room, which opened on the street, served him as dining-room, the second as bed-room, the third as oratory. You could not get out of the oratory without passing through the bed-room, or out of the bed-room without passing through the sitting-room. At the end of the oratory was a closed alcove with a bed, for any one who stayed the night, and the Bishop offered this bed to country curés whom business or the calls of their parish brought to D——.

There was also in the garden a stable which had been the

old hospital kitchen, and in which the Bishop kept two cows. Whatever the quantity of milk they yielded, he invariably sent one half every morning to the hospital patients. "I am paying my tithes," he was wont to say.

His room was rather spacious, and very difficult to heat in the cold weather. As wood is excessively dear at D——, he hit on the idea of partitioning off with planks a portion of the cow-house. Here he spent his evenings during the great frosts, and called it his "winter drawing-room." In this room, as in the dining-room, there was no other furniture but a square deal table and four straw chairs. The dining-room was also adorned with an old buffet stained to imitate rosewood. The Bishop had made the altar which decorated his oratory out of a similar buffet, suitably covered with white cloths and imitation lace. His rich penitents and the religious ladies of D—— had often subscribed to pay for a handsome new altar for Monseigneur's oratory; each time he took the money and gave it to the poor. "The finest of all altars," he would say, "is the soul of an unhappy man who is consoled and thanks GOD."

Nothing more simple can be imagined than the Bishop's bed-room. A long window opening on the garden; opposite the bed, an iron hospital bed with a canopy of green serge; in the shadow of the bed, behind a curtain, toilet articles, still revealing the old elegant habits of the man of fashion; two doors, one near the chimney leading to the oratory, the other near the library leading to the dining-room. The library was a large glass-case full of books; the chimney of wood, painted to imitate marble, was habitually fireless; in the chimney were a pair of iron andirons ornamented with two vases, displaying garlands and grooves which had once been silvered, which was a species of episcopal luxury; over the chimney a crucifix of unsilvered copper fastened to thread-bare black velvet, in a frame which had lost its gilding; near the window was a large table with an inkstand, loaded with irregularly arranged papers and heavy tomes; before the table the straw arm-chair; in front of the bed a priedieu borrowed from the oratory.

He had at his window an antique curtain of heavy woollen stuff, which had grown so old that Madame Magloire, in order to avoid the expense of a new one, was obliged to make

a large seam in the very middle of it. The seam formed a cross, and the Bishop often drew attention to it. "How pleasant that is," he would say. All the rooms in the house, ground floor and first floor, were whitewashed, which is a barrack and hospital fashion. Still, some years later, Madame Magloire discovered, as we shall see further on, paintings under the whitewashed paper, in Mlle Baptistine's bed-room. The rooms were paved with red bricks which were washed every week, and there were straw mats in front of all the beds. This house, moreover, managed by two females, was exquisitely clean from top to bottom: this was the only luxury the Bishop allowed himself, for, as he said, "It takes nothing from the poor." We must allow, however, that of the old property there still remained six silver spoons and forks and a soup ladle, which Madame Magloire daily saw with delight shining splendidly on the coarse table cloth. And as we are here depicting the Bishop of D—— as he was, we must add that he had said, more than once, "I do not think I could give up eating with silver." To this plate must be added two heavy candlesticks of massive silver, which the Bishop inherited from a great-aunt. These branched candlesticks each held two wax candles, and usually figured on the Bishop's chimney. When he had any one to dinner Madame Magloire lit the candles and placed the two candlesticks on the table. There was in the Bishop's bed-room, at the head of his bed, a small cupboard in the wall in which Madame Magloire each night placed the plate and the large ladle; I am bound to add that the key was never taken out.

The house had not a single door that locked. The door of the dining-room, which opened right on the cathedral square, has formerly been adorned with bolts and locks like a prison gate. The Bishop had all this iron removed, and the door was only hasped either night or day: the first passer-by, no matter the hour, had only to push it. At the outset the two females had been greatly alarmed by this never-closed door; but the Bishop said to them, "Have bolts placed on the doors of your rooms if you like." In the end they shared his confidence, or at least affected to do so: Madame Magloire alone was from time to time alarmed. As regards the Bishop, his idea is explained, or at least indicated, by these three lines, which he wrote on the margin of a Bible:

"This is the distinction: the physician's doors must never be closed, the priest's door must always be open." Elsewhere he also wrote: "Do not ask the name of the man who seeks a bed from you, for it is before all the man whom his name embarrasses that needs an asylum."

To give an idea of the domestic life of the Bishop of D——, and the manner in which these two saintly women subordinated their actions, their thoughts, even their feminine instincts, which were easily startled, to the habits and intentions of the Bishop, before he required to express them in words, we cannot do better than copy here a letter from Mlle Baptistine to the Viscountess de Boischevron, her friend of childhood. This letter is in our possession.

"D——, 16th Dec., 18——.

"My dear Madam,—Not a day passes in which we do not talk about you. That is our general habit, but there is an extra reason at present. Just imagine that, in washing and dusting the ceilings and walls, Madame Magloire has made a discovery, and now our two rooms papered with old white-washed paper would not disgrace a chateau like yours. Madame Magloire has torn down all the paper, and there are things under it. My sitting-room, in which there was no furniture, and in which we used to hang up the linen to dry, is fifteen feet in height, eighteen wide, and has a ceiling which was once gilded, and rafters, as in your house. It was covered with canvas during the time this mansion was a hospital. But it is my bed-room, you should see; Madame Magloire has discovered, under at least ten layers of paper, paintings which, though not excellent, are endurable. There is Telemachus dubbed a knight by Minerva; and there he is again in the gardens: I forget their names, but where the Roman ladies only went for a single night. What can I tell you? I have Roman ladies (*here an illegible word*), and so on. Madame Magloire has got it all straight. This summer she intends to repair a little damage, re-varnish it all, and my bed-room will be a real museum. She has also found in a corner of the garret two consoles in the old fashion; they want twelve francs to regild them, but it is better to give that sum to the poor: besides, they are frightfully ugly, and I should prefer a round mahogany table.

"I am very happy, for my brother is so good; he gives all he has to the sick and the poor, and we are often greatly pressed. The country is hard in winter, and something must be done for those who are in want. We are almost lighted and warmed, and, as you can see, that is a great comfort. My brother has peculiar habits; when he does talk, he says 'that a bishop should be so.' Just imagine that the house door is never closed: any one who likes can come in, and is at once in my brother's presence. He fears nothing, not even night; and he says that is his way of showing his bravery. He does not wish me to feel alarmed for him, or for Madame Magloire to do so; he exposes himself to all dangers, and does not wish us to appear as if we even noticed it. We must understand him. He goes out in the rain, he wades through the water, and travels in winter. He is not afraid of the night, suspicious roads, or encounters. Last year he went all alone into a country of robbers, for he would not take us with him. He stayed away a whole fortnight, and folk thought him dead, but he came back all right, and said, 'Here's the way in which I was robbed,' and he opened a chest full of all the treasures of Embrun Cathedral, which the robbers had given him. That time I could not refrain from scolding him a little, but was careful only to speak when the wheels made a noise, so that no one could hear me.

"At first I said to myself, there is no danger that checks him, and he is terrible; but at present I have grown accustomed to it. I make Madame Magloire a sign not to annoy him, and he risks his life as he pleases. I carry off Magloire, go to my bed-room, pray for him, and fall asleep. I am tranquil because I know that if any harm happened to him it would be the death of me. I shall go to heaven with my brother and my bishop. Madame Magloire has had greater difficulty than myself in accustoming herself to what she calls his imprudence, but at present she has learnt to put up with it. We both pray; we are terrified together, and fall asleep. If the Fiend were to enter the house no one would try to stop him, and after all what have we to fear in this house? There is always some one with us who is the stronger, the demon may pass by, but our Lord lives in it. That is enough for me, and my brother no longer requires to say a word to me. I understand him without his speaking,

and we leave ourselves in the hands of Providence, for that is the way in which you must behave to a man who has grandeur in his soul."

As we have seen, prayer, celebration of the Mass, alms giving, consoling the afflicted, tilling a patch of ground, frugality, hospitality, self-denial, confidence, study, and labour, filled every day of his life. *Filled* is the exact word, and certainly the Bishop's day was full of good thoughts, good words, and good actions. Still, it was not complete. If cold or wet weather prevented him from spending an hour or two in the garden before going to bed after the two females had retired, it seemed as it were a species of rite of his to prepare himself for sleep by meditation, in the presence of the grand spectacle of the heavens by night. At times, even at an advanced hour of night, if the old maids were not asleep, they heard him slowly pacing the walks. He was then alone with himself, contemplative, peaceful, adoring, comparing the serenity of his heart with that of æther, affected in the darkness by the visible splendour of the constellations, and the invisible splendour of GOD, and opening his soul to thoughts which fall from the unknown. At such moments, offering up his heart at the hour when the nocturnal flowers offer up their perfumes, he could not have said himself, possibly, what was passing in his mind; but he felt something fly out of him and something descend into him.

He dreamed of the grandeur and presence of GOD; of future eternity, that strange mystery; of past eternity, that even stranger mystery; of all the infinities which buried themselves before his eyes in all directions: and without seeking to comprehend the incomprehensible, he gazed at it. He did not study GOD; he was dazzled by Him. He considered this magnificent concourse of atoms which reveals forces, creates individualities in unity, proportions in space, innumerability in the Infinite, and through light produces beauty. Such a concourse incessantly takes place, and is dissolved again, and hence come life and death.

He would sit down on a wood bench with his back against a rickety trellis, and gaze at the stars through the stunted sickly profiles of his fruit trees. This quarter of an acre, so poorly planted, and so encumbered with sheds and out-houses,

was dear to him, and was sufficient for him. What more was wanting to this aged man, who divided the leisure of his life, which knew so little leisure, between gardening by day and contemplation by night? Was not this limited enclosure with the sky for its roof sufficient for him to be able to adore GOD by turns in His most delicious and most sublime works? Was not this everything, in fact? and what could be desired beyond? A small garden to walk about in, and immensity to dream in; at his feet, what can be cultivated and gathered; over his head, what can be studied and meditated; on the earth a few flowers, and all the stars in the heavens.

At the beginning of October, 1815, and about an hour before sunset, a man travelling on foot entered the little town of D——. The few inhabitants who were at the moment at their windows or doors, regarded this traveller with a species of anxiety. It would be difficult to meet a wayfarer of more wretched appearance; he was a man of middle height, muscular and robust, and in the full vigour of life. He might be forty-six to forty-eight years of age. A cap with a leather peak partly concealed his sunburnt face, down which the perspiration streamed. His shirt of coarse yellow calico, fastened at the neck by a small silver anchor, allowed his hairy chest to be seen; he had on a neck-cloth twisted like a rope, trowsers of blue ticking worn and threadbare, white at one knee and torn at the other; an old gray ragged blouse patched at one elbow with a rag of green cloth; on his back a large new well-filled knapsack, and a large knotty stick in his hand. His stockingless feet were thrust into iron-shod shoes, his hair was cut close, and his beard large. Perspiration, heat, travelling on foot, and the dust, added something sordid to his wretched appearance. His hair was cut close and yet was bristling, for it was beginning to grow a little, and did not seem to have been cut for some time. The man must have been walking all day, for he seemed very tired. Some women in the old suburb at the lower part of the town had seen him halt under the trees on the Gassendi Boulevard, and drink from the fountain at the end of the walk. He must have been very thirsty, for the children that followed him saw him stop and drink again at the fountain on the Market-place. On reaching the corner of the Rue Poichevert, he turned to the left and pro-

ceeded to the Mayor's office. He went in, and came out again a quarter of an hour after. A gendarme was sitting on the stone bench near the door. The man doffed his cap and bowed humbly to the gendarme; the latter, without returning his salute, looked at him attentively, and then entered the office.

There was at that time at D—— a capital inn, with the sign of the *Cross of Colbas*. This inn was kept by a certain Jacquin Labarre, a man highly respected in the town for his relationship to another Labarre, who kept the *Three Dolphins* at Labarre, and had served in the Guides.

The man proceeded to this inn, which was the best in the town, and entered the kitchen, the door of which opened on the street. All the ovens were heated, and a large fire blazed cheerily in the chimney. A fat marmot, flanked by white-legged partridges and grouse, was turning on a long spit before the fire; while two large carp from Lake Lauzet and an Alloz trout were bubbling in the ovens. The landlord, on hearing the door open and a stranger enter, said, without raising his eyes from his stew-pans,—

"What do you want, sir?"

"Supper and a bed," the man replied.

"Nothing easier," said mine host. At this moment he looked up, took in the stranger's appearance at a glance, and added, "For payment."

The man drew a heavy leathern purse from the pocket of his blouse, and replied,—

"I have money."

"In that case I am at your service," said the host.

The man returned the purse to his pocket, took off his knapsack, placed it on the ground near the door, kept his stick in his hand, and sat down on a low stool near the fire. D—— is in the mountains, and the evenings there are cold in October. While going backwards and forwards the landlord still inspected his guest.

"Will supper be ready soon?" the man asked.

'Directly."

While the new comer had his back turned to warm himself, the worthy landlord took a pencil from his pocket, and then tore off the corner of an old newspaper which lay on a small table near the window. On the white margin he wrote

a line or two, folded up the paper, and handed it to a lad who seemed to serve both as turnspit and page. The landlord whispered a word in the boy's ear, and he ran off in the direction of the Mayor's house. The traveller had seen nothing of all this, and he asked again whether supper would be ready soon. The boy came back with the paper in his hand, and the landlord eagerly unfolded it, like a man who is expecting an answer. He read it carefully, then shook his head, and remained thoughtful for a moment. At last he walked up to the traveller, who seemed plunged in anything but a pleasant reverie.

"I cannot make room for you, sir," he said.

The man half turned on his stool.

"What do you mean? Are you afraid I shall bilk you? do you want me to pay you in advance? I have money, I tell you."

"But I have not a spare bed-room."

The man continued quietly: "Put me in the stables."

"I cannot. The horses take up all the room."

"Well," the man continued, "a corner in the loft and a truss of straw: we will see to that after supper."

"I cannot give you any supper."

"Nonsense, I am dying of hunger. I have been on my legs since sunrise, and have walked twelve leagues. I can pay, and demand food."

"I have none," said the landlord.

The man burst into a laugh, and turned to the chimney and the oven.

"Nothing! why what is all this?"

"All this is ordered."

"By whom?"

"By the carriers."

"How many are there of them?"

"Twelve."

"There is enough food here for twenty."

The man sat down again, and said without raising his voice,—

"I am at an inn, I am hungry, and so shall remain."

The landlord then stooped down, and whispered with an accent which made him start. "Be off with you."

The stranger at this moment was thrusting some logs into

the fire with the ferule of his stick, but he turned quickly, and as he was opening his mouth to reply, the landlord continued in the same low voice: "Come, enough of this. Do you wish me to tell you your name? It is Jean Valjean. Now, do you wish me to tell you who you are? On seeing you come in I suspected something, so I sent to the police office, and this is the answer I received. Can you read?"

While saying this, he handed the stranger the paper which had travelled from the inn to the office and back again. The man took a glance at it, and mine host continued after a moment's silence,—

"I am accustomed to be polite with everybody, so pray be off."

The man stooped, picked up his knapsack, and went off. He walked along the high street hap-hazard, keeping close to the houses like a sad and humiliated man. He did not look back once; had he done so he would have seen the landlord of the *Cross of Colbas* in his doorway, surrounded by all his guests and the passers-by, talking eagerly and pointing to him: and judging from the looks of suspicion and terror, he might have guessed that ere long his arrival would be the event of the whole town. He saw nothing of all this, for men who are oppressed do not look back, as they know only too well that an evil destiny is following them.

He walked on thus for a long time, turning down streets he did not know, and forgetting his fatigue, as happens in sorrow. All at once he was sharply assailed by hunger: night was approaching, and he looked round to see whether he could not discover a shelter. The best inn was closed against him, and he sought some very humble pot-house, some wretched den. At this moment a lamp was lit at the end of the street, and a fir-branch hanging from an iron bar stood out on the white twilight sky. He went towards it: it was really a pot-house. The stranger stopped for a moment and looked through the window into the low tap-room, which was lighted up by a small lamp on the table and a large fire on the hearth. Some men were drinking, and the landlord was warming himself; over the flames bubbled a cauldron hanging from an iron hook. This pot-house, which is also a sort of inn, has two entrances, one on the street, the other opening on a small yard full of manure. The traveller did not

dare enter by the street door: he slipped into the yard, stopped once again, and then timidly raised the latch and entered the room.

"Who's there?" the landlord asked.

"Some one who wants a supper and a bed."

"Very good. They are to be had here."

He went in, and all the topers turned to look at him, they examined him for some time while he was taking off his knapsack. Said the landlord to him, "Here is a fire; supper is boiling in the pot: come and warm yourself, comrade."

He sat down in the ingle and stretched out his feet, which were swollen with fatigue. A pleasant smell issued from the cauldron. All that could be distinguished of his face under his cap-peak assumed a vague appearance of comfort blended with the other wretched appearance which the habit of suffering produces. It was, moreover, a firm, energetic, and sad profile; the face was strangely composed, for it began by appearing humble and ended by becoming severe. His eyes gleamed under his brows, like a fire under a curfew. One of the men seated at the table was a fishmonger, who, before entering the pot-house, had gone to put up his horse in Labarre's stables. Accident willed it that on the same morning he had met this ill-looking stranger walking between Bras d'Asse and —— (I have forgotten the name, but I fancy it is Escoublon). Now, on meeting him, the man, who appeared very fatigued, had asked the fishmonger to give him a lift, which had only made him go the faster. This fishmonger had been half an hour previously one of the party surrounding Jacquin Labarre, and had told his unpleasant encounter in the morning to the people at the *Cross of Colbas*. He made an imperceptible sign to the landlord from his seat, and the latter went up to him, and they exchanged a few whispered words. The man had fallen back into his reverie.

The landlord went up to the chimney, laid his hand sharply on the man's shoulder, and said to him,—

"You must be off from here."

The stranger turned and replied gently, "Ah, you know?"

"Yes."

"I was turned out of the other inn."

"And so you will be out of this."

"Where would you have me go?"

"Somewhere else."

The man took his knapsack and stick and went away. As he stepped out, some boys who had followed him from the *Cross of Colbas*, and seemed to have been waiting for him, threw stones at him. He turned savagely, and threatened them with his stick, and the boys dispersed like a flock of birds. He passed in front of the prison, and pulled the iron bell handle; a wicket was opened.

"Mr. Gaoler," he said, as he humbly doffed his cap, "would you be kind enough to open the door and give me a night's lodging?"

A voice answered, "A prison is not an inn; get yourself arrested, and then I will open the door."

As he did not know the streets he wandered about without purpose. He thus reached the prefecture and then the seminary; on passing through the Cathedral Square he shook his fist at the church. There is at the corner of this Square a printing-office, where the proclamations of the Emperor and the Imperial Guard to the army, brought from Elba, and drawn up by Napoleon himself, were first printed. Worn out with fatigue, and hopeless, he sat down on the stone bench at the door of this printing-office. An old lady who was leaving the church at the moment saw the man stretched out in the darkness.

"What are you doing there, my friend?" she said.

He answered, harshly and savagely, "You can see, my good woman, that I am going to sleep."

The good woman, who was really worthy of the name, was the Marchioness de R——.

"On that bench?" she continued.

"I have had for nineteen years a wooden mattress," the man said, "and now I have a stone one."

"Have you been a soldier?"

"Yes, my good woman."

"Why do you not go to the inn?"

"Because I have no money."

"Alas!" said Madame de R——, "I have only two-pence in my purse."

"You can give them to me all the same."

The man took the money, and Madame de R—— con-

tinued, " You cannot lodge at an inn for so small a sum, still you should make the attempt, for you cannot possibly spend the night here. Doubtless you are cold and hungry, and some one might take you in for charity."

" I have knocked at every door."

" Well ? "

" And was turned away at all."

The " good woman " touched the man's arm and pointed to a small house next to the Bishop's Palace.

" You have," she continued, " knocked at every door. Have you done so there ? "

" No."

" Then do it."

On this evening, the Bishop of D——, after his walk in the town, had remained in his bed-room till a late hour. He was engaged on a heavy work on the " duties," which he unfortunately has left incomplete. He was still working at eight o'clock, writing rather uncomfortably on small squares of paper, with a large book open on his knees, when Madame Magloire came in as usual to fetch the plate from the wall-cupboard near the bed. A moment after, the Bishop, feeling that supper was ready, and that his sister might be waiting, closed his book, rose from the table, and walked into the dining-room. It was an oblong apartment, as we have said, with a door opening on the street, and a window looking on the garden. Madame Magloire had laid the table, and while attending to her duties, was chatting with Mademoiselle Baptistine. A lamp was on the table, which was close to the chimney, in which a tolerable fire was lighted.

We can easily figure to ourselves the two females, who had both passed their sixtieth year : Madame Magloire, short, stout, and quick : Mademoiselle Baptistine, gentle, thin, and frail, somewhat taller than her brother, dressed in a puce-coloured silk gown, the fashionable colour in 1806, which she had bought in Paris in that year and still wore. Madame Magloire wore a white cap, on her neck a gold *jeannette*, the only piece of feminine jewelry in the house, a very white handkerchief emerging from a black stuff gown with wide and short sleeves, a calico red and puce checked apron, fastened round the waist with a green ribbon, with a stomacher of the same stuff fastened with two pins at the top corners,

heavy shoes and yellow stockings, like the Marseilles women. Mademoiselle Baptistine's gown was cut after the fashion of 1806, short-waisted, with epaulettes on the sleeves, flaps and buttons, and she concealed her grey hair by a curling front called *à l'enfant.* Madame Magloire had an intelligent, quick, and kindly air though the unevenly raised corners of her mouth and the upper lip, thicker than the lower, gave her a somewhat rough and imperious air. So long as Monseigneur was silent, she spoke to him boldly with a mingled respect and liberty, but so soon as he spoke she passively obeyed, like Mademoiselle, who no longer replied, but restricted herself to obeying and enduring. Even when she was young the latter was not pretty; she had large blue eyes, flush with her head, and a long peaked nose; but all her face, all her person, as we said at the outset, breathed ineffable kindness. She had always been predestined to gentleness, but faith, hope, and charity, those three virtues that softly warm the soul, had gradually elevated that gentleness to sanctity. Nature had only made her a lamb, and religion had made her an angel. Poor holy woman! a sweet reminiscence which has departed.

Mademoiselle afterwards narrated so many times what took place at the Bishopric on this evening that several persons still living remember the slightest details. At the moment when the Bishop entered Madame Magloire was talking with some vivacity; she was conversing with Mademoiselle on a subject that was familiar to her, and to which the Bishop was accustomed—it was the matter of the front door latch. It appears that while going to purchase something for supper, Madame Magloire had heard things spoken of in certain quarters; people were talking of an ill-looking prowler, that a suspicious vagabond had arrived, who must be somewhere in the town, and that it would possibly be an unpleasant thing for any one out late to meet him. The police were very badly managed because the Prefect and the Mayor were not friendly, and tried to injure each other by allowing things to happen. Hence wise people would be their own police, and be careful to close their houses *and lock their doors.*

Madame Magloire italicized the last sentence, but the Bishop had come from his room, where it was rather cold, and was warming himself at the fire while thinking of other matters; in fact, he did not pick up the words which Madame

Magloire had just let drop. She repeated them, and then Mademoiselle, who wished to satisfy Madame Magloire without displeasing her brother, ventured to say timidly,—

"Brother, do you hear what Madame Magloire is saying?"

"I vaguely heard something," the Bishop answered; then he half turned his chair, placed his hands on his knees, and looked up at the old servant with his cordial and easily-pleased face, which the fire illumined from below: "Well, what is it? what is it? are we in any great danger?"

Then Madame Magloire told her story over again, while exaggerating it slightly, though unsuspicious of the fact. It would seem that a gipsy, a barefooted fellow, a sort of dangerous beggar, was in the town at the moment. He had tried to get a lodging at Jacquin Labarre's, who had refused to take him in. He had been seen prowling about the streets at nightfall, and was evidently a gallows bird, with his frightful face.

"Is he really?" said the Bishop.

This cross-questioning encouraged Madame Magloire; it seemed to indicate that the Bishop was beginning to grow alarmed, and hence she continued triumphantly,—

"Yes, Monseigneur, it is so, and some misfortune will occur in the town this night: everybody says so, and then the police are so badly managed (useful repetition). Fancy living in a mountain town, and not even having lanterns in the streets at nights! You go out and find yourself in pitch darkness. I say, Monseigneur, and Mademoiselle says—"

"I," the sister interrupted, "say nothing; whatever my brother does is right."

Madame Magloire continued, as if no protest had been made,—

"We say that this house is not at all safe, and that if Monseigneur permits I will go to Paulin Musebois, the locksmith, and tell him to put the old bolts on the door again; I have them by me, and it will not take a minute; and I say, Monseigneur, that we ought to have bolts if it were only for this night, for I say that a door which can be opened from the outside by the first passer-by is most terrible: besides, Monseigneur is always accustomed to say Come in, and in the middle of the night,—oh my gracious! there is no occasion to ask for permission."

At this moment there was a rather loud rap at the front door.

"Come in," said the Bishop.

The door was thrown open wide, as if some one were pushing it energetically and resolutely. A man entered whom we already know; it was the traveller whom we saw just now wandering about in search of a shelter. He entered and stopped, leaving the door open behind him. He had his knapsack on his shoulder, his stick in his hand, and a rough, bold, wearied, and violent expression in his eyes. The fire-light fell on him; he was hideous; it was a sinister apparition.

Madame Magloire had not even the strength to utter a cry, she shivered and stood with widely-open mouth. Mademoiselle Baptistine turned, perceived the man who entered, and half started up in terror; then, gradually turning her head to the chimney, she began looking at her brother, and her face became again calm and serene. The Bishop fixed a quiet eye on the man, as he opened his mouth, doubtless to ask the new-comer what he wanted. The man leant both his hands on his stick, looked in turn at the two aged females and the old man, and, not waiting for the Bishop to speak, said in a loud voice,—

"My name is Jean Valjean. I am a galley-slave, and have spent nineteen years in the bagne. I was liberated four days ago, and started for Pontarlier, which is my destination. I have been walking for four days since I left Toulon, and to-day I have marched twelve leagues. This evening on coming into the town I went to the inn, but was sent away in consequence of my yellow passport, which I had shown at the police office. I went to another inn, and the landlord said to me, Be off. It was the same everywhere, and no one would have any dealings with me. I went to the prison, but the gaoler would not take me in. I got into a dog's kennel, but the dog bit me and drove me off, as if it had been a man; it seemed to know who I was. I went into the fields to sleep in the star-light, but there were no stars. I thought it would rain, and as there was no GOD to prevent it from raining, I came back to the town to sleep in a doorway. I was lying down on a stone in the square, when a good woman pointed to your house, and said, Go and knock there. What sort of a house is this? do you keep an inn? I have money, 109

francs 15 sous, which I earned at the bagne by my nineteen years' toil. I will pay, for what do I care for that, as I have money! I am very tired and frightfully hungry; will you let me stay here?"

"Madame Magloire," said the Bishop, "you will lay another knife and fork."

The man advanced three paces, and approached the lamp which was on the table. "Wait a minute," he continued, as if he had not comprehended, "that will not do. Did you not hear me say that I was a galley-slave, a convict, and have just come from the bagne?" He took from his pocket a large yellow paper, which he unfolded. "Here is my passport, yellow as you see, which turns me out wherever I go. Will you read it? I can read it, for I learned to do so at the bagne, where there is a school for those who like to attend it. This is what is written in my passport: 'Jean Valjean, a liberated convict, native of'—but that does not concern you —'has remained nineteen years at the galleys. Five years for robbery with house-breaking, fourteen years for having tried to escape four times. The man is very dangerous.' All the world has turned me out, and are you willing to receive me? is this an inn? will you give me some food and a bed? have you a stable?"

"Madame Magloire," said the Bishop, "you will put clean sheets on the bed in the alcove."

We have already explained of what nature was the obedience of the two females. Madame Magloire left the room to carry out the orders. The Bishop turned to the man.

"Sit down and warm yourself, sir. We shall sup directly, and your bed will be got ready while we are supping."

The man understood this at once. The expression of his face, which had hitherto been gloomy and harsh, was marked with stupefaction, joy, doubt, and became extraordinary. He began stammering like a lunatic.

"Is it true? what? You will let me stay, you will not turn me out, a convict? You call me *Sir*, you do not 'thou' me. 'Get out, dog,' that is what is always said to me; I really believed that you would turn me out, and hence told you at once who I am! Oh, what a worthy woman she was who sent me here! I shall have supper, a bed with mattresses and sheets, like everybody else. For nineteen years

I have not slept in a bed! You really mean that I am to stay. You are worthy people; besides, I have money, and will pay handsomely. By the way, what is your name, Mr. Landlord? I will pay anything you please, for you are a worthy man. You keep an inn, do you not?"

"I am," said the Bishop, "a priest living in this house."

"A priest!" the man continued. "Oh! what a worthy priest! I suppose you will not ask me for money. The Curé, I suppose, the Curé of that big church? Oh yes, what an ass I am, I did not notice your cassock."

While speaking he deposited his knapsack and stick in a corner, returned his passport to his pocket, and sat down. While Mademoiselle Baptistine regarded him gently, he went on,—

"You are humane, sir, and do not feel contempt. A good priest is very good. Then you do not want me to pay?"

"No," said the Bishop, "keep your money. How long did you take in earning these 109 francs?"

"Nineteen years."

"Nineteen years!" The Bishop gave a deep sigh.

The man went on,—"I have all my money still; in four days I have only spent 25 sous, which I earned by helping to unload carts at Grasse. As you are an abbé I will tell you: we had a chaplain at the bagne, and one day I saw a bishop, Monseigneur, as they call him. He is the curé over the curés. He said mass in the middle of the bagne at an altar, and had a pointed gold thing on his head, which glistened in the bright sunshine; we were drawn up on three sides of a square, with guns and lighted matches facing us. He spoke, but was too far off, and we did not hear him. That is what a bishop is."

While he was speaking the Bishop had gone to close the door, which had been left open. Madame Magloire came in, bringing a silver spoon and fork, which she placed on the table.

"Madame Magloire," said the Bishop, "lay them as near as you can to the fire;" and turning to his guest, he said, "The night breeze is sharp on the Alps, and you must be cold, sir."

Each time he said the word *Sir* with his gentle grave voice the man's face was illumined. *Sir* to a convict is the glass of

water to the shipwrecked sailor of the Meduse. Ignominy thirsts for respect.

"This lamp gives a very bad light," the Bishop continued. Madame Magloire understood, and fetched from the chimney of Monseigneur's bed-room the two silver candlesticks, which she placed on the table ready lighted.

"Monsieur le Curé," said the man, "you are good, and do not despise me. You receive me as a friend and light your wax candles for me, and yet I have not hidden from you whence I come, and that I am an unfortunate fellow."

The Bishop, who was seated by his side, gently touched his hand. "You need not have told me who you were; this is not my house, but the house of Christ. This door does not ask a man who enters whether he has a name, but if he has a sorrow; you are suffering, you are hungry and thirsty, and so be welcome. And do not thank me, or say that I am receiving you in my house, for no one is at home here excepting the man who has need of an asylum. I tell you, who are a passer-by, that you are more at home here than I am myself, and all there is here is yours. Why do I want to know your name? besides, before you told it to me you had one which I knew."

The man opened his eyes in amazement.

"Is that true? you know my name?"

"Yes," the Bishop answered, "you are my brother."

"Monsieur le Curé," the man exclaimed, "I was very hungry when I came in, but you are so kind that I do not know at present what I feel; it has passed over."

The Bishop looked at him and said,—

"You have suffered greatly?"

"Oh! the red jacket, the cannon ball on your foot, a plank to sleep on, heat, cold, labour, the set of men, the blows, the double chain for a nothing, a dungeon for a word, even when you are ill in bed, and the chain-gang. The very dogs are happier. Nineteen years! and now I am forty-six; and at present, the yellow passport!"

"Yes," said the Bishop, "you have come from a place of sorrow. Listen to me; there will be more joy in heaven over the tearful face of a repentant sinner than over the white robes of one hundred just men. If you leave that mournful place with thoughts of hatred and anger against your fellow-

men you are worthy of pity; if you leave it with thoughts of kindliness, gentleness, and peace, you are worth more than any of us."

In the meanwhile Madame Magloire had served the soup: it was made of water, oil, bread, and salt, and a little bacon, and the rest of the supper consisted of a piece of mutton, figs, a fresh cheese, and a loaf of rye bread. She had herself added a bottle of old Mauves wine. The Bishop's face suddenly assumed the expression of gaiety peculiar to hospitable natures. "To table," he said eagerly, as he was wont to do when any stranger supped with him; and he bade the man sit down on his right hand, while Mlle. Baptistine, perfectly peaceful and natural, took her seat on his left. The Bishop said grace, and then served the soup himself, according to his wont. The man began eating greedily. All at once the Bishop said,—

"It strikes me that there is something wanting on the table."

Madame Magloire, truth to tell, had only laid the absolutely necessary silver. Now it was the custom in this house, when the Bishop had any one to supper, to arrange the whole stock of plate on the table, as an innocent display. This graceful semblance of luxury was a species of childishness full of charm in this gentle and strict house, which elevated poverty to dignity. Madame Magloire took the hint, went out without a word, and a moment after the remaining spoons and forks glittered on the cloth, symmetrically arranged before each of the guests.

CHAPTER II

And now, in order to give an idea of what took place at table, we cannot do better than transcribe a passage of a letter written by Mademoiselle Baptistine to Madame Boischevron, in which the conversation between the convict and the Bishop is recorded with simple minuteness.

* * * * *

"The man paid no attention to any one; he ate with frightful voracity, but after supper he said,—

"'Monsieur le Curé, all this is much too good for me, but I am bound to say that the carriers who would not let me sup with them have better cheer than you.'

"Between ourselves, this remark slightly offended me, but my brother answered,—

"'They are harder worked than I am.'

"'No,' the man continued, 'they have more money. You are poor, as I can plainly see; perhaps you are not even curé. Ah, if Heaven were just you ought to be a curé.'

"'Heaven is more than just,' said my brother. A moment after he added,—

"'Monsieur Jean Valjean, I think you said you were going to Pontarlier?'

"'I am compelled to go there.' Then he continued, 'I must be off by sunrise to-morrow morning; it is a tough journey, for if the nights are cold the days are hot.'

"Towards the end, when we had come to the figs, there was a knock at the door. It was Mother Gerbaud with her little baby in her arms. My brother kissed the child's forehead, and borrowed from me 15 sous which I happened to have about me, to give them to the mother. The man, while this was going on, did not seem to pay great attention: he said nothing, and seemed very tired. When poor old Mother Gerbaud left, my brother said grace, and then said to this man: 'You must need your bed.' Madame Magloire hastily removed the plate. I understood that we must retire in order to let this traveller sleep, and we both went upstairs. I, however, sent Madame Magloire to lay on the man's bed a roebuck's hide from the Black Forest, which was in my room, for the nights are very cold, and that keeps you warm. It is a pity that this skin is old and the hair is wearing off. My brother bought it when he was in Germany, at Tottlingen, near the source of the Danube, as well as the small ivory-handled knife which I use at meals.

"Madame Magloire came up again almost immediately. We said our prayers in the room where the clothes are hung up to dry, and then retired to our bed-rooms without saying a word to each other."

After bidding his sister good-night Monseigneur Welcome took up one of the silver candlesticks, handed the other to his guest, and said,—

"I will lead you to your room, sir."

The man followed him. The reader will remember, from our description, that the rooms were so arranged that in order to reach the oratory where the alcove was it was necessary to

pass through the Bishop's bedroom. At the moment when he went through this room Madame Magloire was putting away the plate in the cupboard over the bed-head : it was the last job she did every night before retiring. The Bishop led his guest to the alcove, where a clean bed was prepared for him; the man placed the branched candlestick on a small table.

"I trust you will pass a good night," said the Bishop. "To-morrow morning, before starting, you will drink a glass of milk fresh from our cows."

"Thank you, Monsieur l'Abbe," the man said. He had hardly uttered these peaceful words when, suddenly and without any transition, he had a trange emotion, which would have frightened the two old females to death had they witnessed it. Even at the present day it is difficult to account for what urged him at the moment. Did he wish to warn or to threaten ? was he simply obeying a species of instinctive impulse which was obscure to himself ? He suddenly turned to the old gentleman, folded his arms, and, fixing on him a savage glance, he exclaimed hoarsely,—

"What ! you really lodge me so close to you as that ?" He broke off and added with a laugh, in which there was something monstrous,—

"Have you reflected fully, who tells you that I have not committed a murder ?"

The Bishop answered : "That concerns GOD."

Then gravely moving his lips, like a man who is praying and speaking to himself, he stretched out two fingers of his right hand and blessed the man, who did not bow his head, and returned to his bed-room, without turning his head or looking behind him. When the alcove was occupied, a large serge curtain drawn right across the oratory concealed the altar. The Bishop knelt down as he passed before this curtain, and offered up a short prayer; a moment after he was in his garden, walking, dreaming, contemplating, his soul and thoughts entirely occupied by those grand mysteries which GOD displays at night to eyes that remain open.

As for the man, he was really so wearied that he did not even take advantage of the nice white sheets. He blew out the candle with his nostrils, after the fashion of convicts, and threw himself in his clothes upon the bed, where he at once fell into a deep sleep. Midnight was striking as the Bishop

returned from the garden to his room, and a few minutes later everybody was asleep in the small house.

Toward the middle of the night Jean Valjean awoke. He belonged to a poor peasant family of la Brie. In his childhood he had not been taught to read, and when he was of man's age he was a wood-lopper at Faverolles. His mother's name was Jeanne Mathieu, his father's Jean Valjean or Vlajean, probably a sobriquet and a contraction of *Voilà Jean*. Jean Valjean possessed a pensive but not melancholy character, which is peculiar to affectionate natures; but altogether he was a dull, insignificant fellow, at least apparently. He had lost father and mother when still very young: the latter died of a badly-managed milk fever; the former, a pruner, like himself, was killed by a fall from a tree. All that was left Jean Valjean was a sister older than himself, a widow with seven children, boys and girls. This sister brought Jean Valjean up, and so long as her husband was alive she supported her brother. When the husband died, the oldest of the seven children was eight years of age, the youngest, one, while Jean Valjean had just reached his twenty-fifth year; he took the place of the father, and in his turn supported the sister who had reared him. This was done simply as a duty, and even rather roughly by Jean Valjean; and his youth was thus expended in hard and ill-paid toil. He was never known to have had a sweetheart, for he had no time for love-making.

At night he came home tired, and ate his soup without saying a word. His sister, Mother Jeanne, while he was eating, often took out of his porringer the best part of his meal, the piece of meat, the slice of bacon, or the heart of the cabbage, to give it to one of her children; he, still eating, bent over the table with his head almost in the soup, and his long hair falling round his porringer and hiding his eyes, pretended not to see it, and let her do as she pleased. There was at Faverolles, not far from the Valjeans' cottage, on the other side of the lane, a farmer's wife called Marie Claude. The young Valjeans, who were habitually starving, would go at times and borrow in their mother's name a pint of milk from Marie Claude, which they drank behind a hedge or in some corner, tearing the vessel from each other so eagerly that the little girls spilt the milk over their aprons. Their mother, had she been aware of this fraud, would have severely cor-

rected the delinquents, but Jean Valjean, coarse and rough though he was, paid M ie Claude for the milk behind his sister's back, and the children were not punished.

He earned in the pruning season eighteen sous a day, and besides hired himself out as reaper, labourer, neatherd, and odd man. He did what he could; his sister worked too, but what could she do with seven children? It was a sad group, which wretchedness gradually enveloped and choked. One winter was hard, and Jean had no work to do, and the family had no bread. No bread, literally none, and seven children.

One Sunday evening, Maubert Isabeau, the baker in the church square at Faverolles, was just going to bed when he heard a violent blow dealt the grating in front of his shop. He arrived in time to see an arm passed through a hole made by a fist through the grating and window pane; the arm seized a loaf, and carried it off. Isabeau ran out hastily; the thief ran away at his hardest, but the baker caught him up and stopped him. The thief had thrown away the loaf; but his arm was still bleeding; it was Jean Valjean.

This took place in 1795. Jean Valjean was brought before the courts of the day, charged "with burglary committed with violence at night, in an inhabited house." He had a gun, was a splendid shot, and a bit of a poacher, and this injured him. There is a legitimate prejudice against poachers. Jean Valjean was found guilty, and the terms of the code were formal. He was sentenced to five years at the galleys.

On April 22nd, 1796, men were crying in the streets of Paris the victory of Montenotte, gained by the General-in-chief of the army of Italy, whom the message of the Directory to the Five Hundred of 2 Floréal, an IV., calls Buona-Parte; and on the same day a heavy gang was put in chains at Bicetre, and Jean Valjean formed part of the chain. An ex-gaoler of the prison, who is now nearly ninety years of age, perfectly remembers the wretched man, who was chained at the end of the fourth cordon, in the north angle of the court-yard. He was seated on the ground like the rest, and seemed not at all to understand his position, except that it was horrible. It is probable that he also saw something excessive through the vague ideas of an utterly ignorant man. While the bolt of his iron collar was being riveted with heavy hammer blows behind his head, he wept, tears choked him, and

prevented him from speaking, and he could only manage to say from time to time: "I was a wood-cutter at Faverolles." Then, while still continuing to sob, he raised his right hand, and lowered it gradually seven times, as if touching seven uneven heads in turn, and from this gesture it could be guessed that whatever the crime he had committed, he had done it to feed and clothe seven children.

He started for Toulon, and arrived there after a journey of twenty-seven days in a cart, with the chain on his neck. At Toulon he was dressed in the red jacket. All that had hitherto been his life, even to his name, was effaced. He was no longer Jean Valjean, but No. 24,601.

Toward the end of the fourth year, Jean Valjean escaped and wandered about the fields at liberty for two days: if it is liberty to be hunted down; to turn one's head at every moment; to start at the slightest sound. On the evening of the second day he was recaptured; he had not eaten or slept for six-and-thirty hours. The maritime tribunal added three years to his sentence for his crime, which made it eight years. In the sixth year, he again tried to escape, but could not succeed. He was missing at roll call, the gun was fired, and at night the watchman found him hidden under the keel of a ship that was building, and he resisted the *garde chiourme* who seized him. Escape and rebellion: this fact, foreseen by the special code, was punished by an addition of five years, of which two would be spent in double chains. Thirteen years. In his tenth year his turn came again, and he took advantage of it, but succeeded no better: three years for this new attempt, or sixteen years in all. Finally, I think it was during his thirteenth year that he made a last attempt, and only succeeded so far as to be recaptured in four hours: three years for these four hours, and a total of nineteen years. In October, 1815, he was liberated; he had gone in in 1796 for breaking a window and stealing a loaf.

Jean Valjean entered the bagne sobbing and shuddering: he left it stoically. He entered it in despair: he came out of it gloomy.

One fact we must not omit mentioning is that he possessed a physical strength with which no one in the bagne could compete. In turning a capstan, Jean Valjean was equal to four men; he frequently raised and held on his back enormous

weights, and took the place at times of that instrument which is called a jack, and was formerly called *orgueil*, from which, by the way, the Rue Montorgueil derived its name. His comrades surnamed him Jean the Jack. Once when the balcony of the Town Hall at Toulon was being repaired, one of those admirable caryatides of Puget's which support the balcony became loose and almost fell. Jean Valjean, who was on the spot, supported the statue with his shoulder, and thus gave the workmen time to come up.

His suppleness even exceeded his vigour. Some convicts, who perpetually dream of escaping, eventually make a real science of combined skill and strength; it is the science of the muscles. A full course of mysterious statics is daily practised by the prisoners, those eternal enviers of flies and birds. Swarming up a perpendicular, and finding a resting-place where a projection is scarcely visible, was child's play for Jean Valjean. Given a corner of a wall, with the tension of his back and hams, with his elbows and heels clinging to the rough stone, he would hoist himself as if by magic to a third storey, and at times would ascend to the very roof of the bagne. He spoke little, and never laughed; it needed some extreme emotion to draw from him, once or twice a year, that mournful convict laugh which is, as it were, the echo of fiendish laughter. To look at him, he seemed engaged in continually gazing at something terrible. He was, in fact, absorbed. Through the sickly perceptions of an incomplete nature and a crushed intellect, he saw confusedly that a monstrous thing was hanging over him. In this obscure and dull gloom through which he crawled, wherever he turned his head and essayed to raise his eye, he saw, with a terror blended with rage, built up above him, with frightfully scarped sides, a species of terrific pile of things, laws, prejudices, men and facts, whose outline escaped him, whose mass terrified him, and which was nothing else but that prodigious pyramid which we call civilization.

In this situation, Jean Valjean thought, and what could be the nature of his reverie? If the grain of corn had its thoughts, when ground by the mill-stone, it would doubtless think as did Jean Valjean. All these things, realities full of spectres, phantasmagorias full of reality, ended by creating for him a sort of internal condition which is almost inexpressible.

The starting-point, like the goal, of all his thoughts, was hatred of human law: that hatred which, if it be not arrested in its development by some providential incident, becomes within a given time a hatred of society, then a hatred of the human race, next a hatred of creation, and which is expressed by a vague, incessant, and brutal desire to injure some one, no matter whom. As we see, it was not unfairly that the passport described Jean Valjean as a highly dangerous man. Year by year this soul had become more and more withered, slowly but fatally. A dry soul must have a dry eye, and on leaving the bagne, nineteen years had elapsed since he had shed a tear.

When the hour for quitting the bagne arrived, when Jean Valjean heard in his ear the unfamiliar words "you are free," the moment seemed improbable and extraordinary, and a ray of bright light, of the light of the living, penetrated to him; but it soon grew pale. Jean Valjean had been dazzled by the idea of liberty, and had believed in a new life, but he soon saw that it is a liberty to which a yellow passport is granted. And around this there was much bitterness; he had calculated that his earnings, during his stay at the bagne, should have amounted to 171 francs. We are bound to add that he had omitted to take into his calculations the forced rest of Sundays and holidays, which, during nineteen years, entailed a diminution of about 24 francs. However this might be, the sum was reduced, through various local stoppages, to 109 francs, 15 sous, which were paid to him when he left the bagne. He did not understand it all, and fancied that he had been robbed.

On the day after his liberation, he saw at Grasse, in front of a distillery of orange-flower water, men unloading bales; he offered his services, and as the work was of a pressing nature, they were accepted. He set to work, he was intelligent, powerful, and skilful, and his master appeared satisfied. While he was at work a gendarme passed, noticed him, asked for his paper, and he was compelled to show his yellow pass. This done, Jean Valjean resumed his toil. A little while previously he had asked one of the workmen what he earned for his day's work, and the answer was 30 sous. At night, as he was compelled to start again the next morning, he went to the master of the distillery and asked for pay-

ment; the master did not say a word, but gave him 15 sous, and when he protested, the answer was, "That is enough for you." He became pressing, the master looked him in the face and said, "Mind you don't get into prison."

Here again he regarded himself as robbed; society, the state, by diminishing his earnings, had robbed him wholesale; now it was the turn of the individual to commit retail robbery. Liberation is not deliverance, a man may leave the bagne, but not condemnation. We have seen what happened to him at Grasse, and we know how he was treated at D——.

As two o'clock pealed from the cathedral bell, Jean Valjean awoke. What aroused him was that the bed was too comfortable, for close on twenty years he had not slept in a bed, and though he had not undressed, the sensation was too novel not to disturb his sleep. He had been asleep for more than four hours, and his weariness had worn off; and he was accustomed not to grant many hours to repose. He opened his eyes and looked into the surrounding darkness, and then he closed them again to go to sleep once more. When many diverse sensations have agitated a day, and when matters preoccupy the mind, a man may sleep, but he cannot go to sleep again. Sleep comes more easily than it returns, and this happened to Jean Valjean. As he could not go to sleep again, he began thinking.

Many thoughts occurred to him, but there was one which constantly reverted and expelled all the rest. This thought we will at once describe; he had noticed the six silver forks and spoons and the great ladle which Madame Magloire put on the table. This plate overwhelmed him—it was there—a few yards from him. When he crossed the adjoining room to reach the one in which he now was, the old servant was putting it into a small cupboard at the bed-head,—he had carefully noticed this cupboard—it was on the right as you came in from the dining-room. The plate was heavy and old, the big soup-ladle was worth at least 200 francs, or double what he had earned in nineteen years, though it was true that he would have earned more had not the officials robbed him.

His mind oscillated for a good hour in these fluctuations, with which a struggle was most assuredly blended. When three o'clock struck he opened his eyes, suddenly sat up, stretched out his arms, and felt for his knapsack, which he

had thrown into a corner of the alcove, then let his legs hang and felt himself seated on the bed-side almost without knowing how. He remained for awhile thoughtfully in this attitude, which would have had something sinister about it for any one who had seen him, the only wakeful person in the house. All at once he stooped, took off his shoes, then resumed his thoughtful posture, and remained motionless. In the midst of this hideous meditation, the ideas which we have indicated incessantly crossed his brain, entered, went out, returned, and weighed upon him; and then he thought, without knowing why, and with the mechanical obstinacy of reverie, of a convict he had known at the bagne, of the name of Brevet, whose trousers were only held up by a single knitted brace. The draught-board design of that brace incessantly returned to his mind. He remained in this situation, and would probably have remained so till sunrise, had not the clock struck the quarter or the half-hour. It seemed as if this stroke said to him, To work! He rose, hesitated for a moment and listened; all was silent in the house, and he went on tip-toe to the window, through which he peered. The night was not very dark; there was a full moon, across which heavy clouds were chased by the wind. This produced alternations of light and shade, and a species of twilight in the room; this twilight, sufficient to guide him, but intermittent in consequence of the clouds, resembled that livid hue produced by the grating of a cellar over which people are continually passing. On reaching the window, Jean Valjean examined it; it was without bars, looked on the garden, and was only closed, according to the fashion of the country, by a small peg. He opened it, but as a cold sharp breeze suddenly entered the room, he closed it again directly. He gazed into the garden with that attentive glance which studies rather than looks, and found that it was enclosed by a white-washed wall easy to climb over. Beyond it he noticed the tops of trees standing at regular distances, which proved that this wall separated the garden from a public walk.

After taking this glance, he walked boldly to the alcove, opened his knapsack, took out something which he laid on the bed, put his shoes in one of the pouches, placed the knapsack on his shoulders, put on his cap, the peak of which he pulled over his eyes, groped for his stick, which he placed in

the window nook, and then returned to the bed, and took up the object he had laid on it. It resembled a short iron bar, sharpened at one of its ends. It would have been difficult to distinguish in the darkness for what purpose this piece of iron had been fashioned; perhaps it was a lever, perhaps it was a club. By daylight it could have been seen that it was nothing but a miner's candlestick. The convicts at that day were sometimes employed in extracting rock from the lofty hills that surround Toulon, and it was not infrequent for them to have mining tools at their disposal. The miners' candlesticks are made of massive steel, and have a point at the lower end, by which they are dug into the rock. He took the bar in his right hand, and holding his breath and deadening his footsteps he walked towards the door of the adjoining room, the Bishop's as we know. On reaching this door he found it ajar—the Bishop had not shut it.

Jean Valjean listened, but there was not a sound; he pushed the door with the tip of his finger lightly, and with the furtive restless gentleness of a cat that wants to get in. The door yielded to the pressure, and made an almost imperceptible and silent movement, which slightly widened the opening. He waited for a moment, and then pushed the door again more boldly. It continued to yield silently, and the opening was soon large enough for him to pass through. But there was near the door a small table which formed an awkward angle with it, and barred the entrance.

Jean Valjean noticed the difficulty: the opening must be increased at all hazards. He made up his mind, and pushed the door a third time, more energetically still. This time there was a badly-oiled hinge, which suddenly uttered a hoarse prolonged cry in the darkness. Jean Valjean started; the sound of the hinge smote his ear startlingly and formidably, as if it had been the trumpet of the day of judgment. In the fanastic exaggeration of the first minute, he almost imagined that this hinge had become animated, and suddenly obtained a terrible vitality and barked like a dog to warn and awaken the sleepers. He stopped, shuddering and dismayed, and fell back from tip-toes on his heels. He felt the arteries in his temples beat like two forge hammers, and it seemed to him that his breath issued from his lungs with the noise of the wind roaring out of a cavern.

A few minutes passed, during which the door remained wide open. He ventured to look into the room, and found that nothing had stirred, the creaking of the rusty hinge had not awakened any one. The first danger had passed, but still there was fearful tumult within him. But he did not recoil, he had not done so even when he thought himself lost; he only thought of finishing the job as speedily as possible, and entered the bed-room. The room was in a state of perfect calmness; here and there might be distinguished confused and vague forms, which by day were papers scattered over the table, open folios, books piled on a sofa, an easy-chair covered with clothes, and a priedieu, all of which were at this moment only dark nooks and patches of white. Jean Valjean advanced cautiously and carefully, and avoided coming into collision with the furniture. He heard from the end of the room the calm and regular breathing of the sleeping Bishop. Suddenly he stopped, for he was close to the bed; he had reached it sooner than he anticipated.

Nature at times blends her effects and spectacles with our actions with a species of gloomy and intelligent design, as if wishing to make us reflect. For nearly half an hour a heavy cloud had covered the sky, but at the moment when Jean Valjean stopped at the foot of the bed, this cloud was rent asunder as if expressly, and a moonbeam passing through the tall window suddenly illumined the Bishop's pale face. He was sleeping peacefully, and was wrapped up in a long garment of brown wool, which covered his arms down to the wrists. His head was thrown back on the pillow in the easy attitude of repose, and his hand, adorned with the pastoral ring, and which had done so many good deeds, hung out of bed. His entire face was lit up by a vague expression of satisfaction, hope, and beatitude—it was more than a smile, and almost a radiance. He had on his forehead the inexpressible reflection of an invisible light, for the soul of a just man contemplates a mysterious heaven during sleep. A reflection of this heaven was cast over the Bishop, but it was at the same time a luminous transparency, for the heaven was within him, and was conscience.

There was almost a divinity in this unconsciously august man. Jean Valjean was standing in the shadow with his crowbar in his hand, motionless and terrified by this luminous

old man. He had never seen anything like this before, and such confidence horrified him. The moral world has no greater spectacle than this, a troubled restless conscience, which is on the point of committing a bad action, contemplating the sleep of a just man.

The Bishop continued to sleep peacefully beneath this terrific glance. A moonbeam rendered the crucifix over the mantle-piece dimly visible, which seemed to open its arms for both, with a blessing for one and a pardon for the other. All at once Jean Valjean put on his cap again, then walked rapidly along the bed, without looking at the Bishop, and went straight to the cupboard. He raised his crow-bar to force the lock, but as the key was in it, he opened it, and the first thing he saw was the plate-basket, which he seized. He hurried across the room, not caring for the noise he made, re-entered the oratory, opened the window, seized his stick, put the silver in his pocket, threw away the basket, leaped into the garden, bounded over the wall like a tiger, and fled.

The next morning at sunrise Monseigneur Welcome was walking about the garden, when Madame Magloire came running towards him in a state of great alarm.

"Monseigneur, Monseigneur!" she screamed, "does your Grandeur know where the plate basket is?"

"Yes," said the Bishop.

"The Lord be praised," she continued; "I did not know what had become of it."

The Bishop had just picked up the basket in a flower-bed, and now handed it to Madame Magloire. "Here it is," he said.

"Well!" she said, "there is nothing in it; where is the plate?"

"Ah!" the Bishop replied, "it is the plate that troubles your mind. Well, I do not know where that is."

"Good Lord! it is stolen, and that man who came last night is the robber."

In a twinkling Madame Magloire had run to the oratory, entered the alcove, and returned to the Bishop. He was stooping down and looking sorrowfully at a cochlearia, whose stem the basket had broken. He raised himself on hearing Madame Magloire scream,—

"Monseigneur, the man has gone! the plate is stolen!"

While uttering this exclamation her eyes fell on a corner of the garden where there were signs of climbing; the coping of the wall had been torn away.

"That is the way he went! he leaped into Cochefilet lane. Ah, what an abomination; he has stolen our plate!"

The Bishop remained silent for a moment, then raised his earnest eyes, and said gently to Madame Magloire,—

"By the way, was that plate ours?"

Madame Magloire was speechless; there was another interval of silence, after which the Bishop continued—

"Madame Magloire, I had wrongfully held back this silver, which belonged to the poor. Who was this person? evidently a poor man."

"Good gracious!" Madame Magloire continued; "I do not care for it, nor does Mademoiselle, but we feel for Monseigneur. With what will Monseigneur eat now?"

The Bishop looked at her in amazement. "Why, are there not pewter forks to be had?"

Madame Magloire shrugged her shoulders. "Pewter smells!"

"Then iron!"

Madame Magloire made an expressive grimace. "Iron tastes."

"Well then," said the Bishop, "wood!"

A few minutes later he was breakfasting at the same table at which Jean Valjean sat on the previous evening. While breakfasting Monseigneur Welcome gaily remarked to his sister, who said nothing, and to Madame Magloire, who growled in a low voice, that spoon and fork, even of wood, are not required to dip a piece of bread in a cup of milk.

"What an idea!" Madame Magloire said, as she went backwards and forwards, "to receive a man like that, and lodge him by one's side. And what a blessing it is that he only stole! Oh, Lord! the mere thought makes a body shudder."

As the brother and sister were leaving the table there was a knock at the door.

"Come in," said the Bishop.

The door opened, and a strange and violent group appeared on the threshold. Three men were holding a fourth by the collar. The three men were gendarmes, the fourth was Jean Valjean. A corporal, who apparently commanded the party, came in and walked up to the Bishop with a military salute.

"Monseigneur," he said.

At this word Jean Valjean, who was gloomy and crushed, raised his head with a stupefied air.

"Monseigneur," he muttered, "then he is not the Curé."

"Silence!" said a gendarme. "This gentleman is Monseigneur the Bishop."

In the meanwhile Monseigneur Welcome had advanced as rapidly as his great age permitted.

"Ah! there you are," he said, looking at Jean Valjean. "I am glad to see you. Why, I gave you the candlesticks too, which are also silver, and will fetch you 200 francs. Why did you not take them away with the rest of the plate?"

Jean Valjean opened his eyes, and looked at the Bishop with an expression which no human language could render.

"Monseigneur," the corporal said, "what this man told us was true then? We met him, and as he looked as if he were running away, we arrested him. He had this plate—"

"And he told you," the Bishop interrupted, with a smile, "that it was given to him by an old priest at whose house he passed the night? I see it all. And you brought him back here? That is a mistake."

"In that case," the corporal continued, "we can let him go?"

"Of course," the Bishop answered.

The gendarmes loosed their hold of Jean Valjean, who tottered back.

"Is it true that I am at liberty?" he said, in an almost inarticulate voice, and as if speaking in his sleep.

"Yes, you are let go; don't you understand?" said a gendarme.

"My friend," the Bishop continued, "before you go take your candlesticks."

He went to the mantle-piece, fetched the two candlesticks, and handed them to Jean Valjean. The two females watched him do so without a word, without a sign, without a look that could disturb the Bishop. Jean Valjean was trembling in all his limbs; he took the candlesticks mechanically, and with wandering looks.

"Now," said the Bishop, "go in peace. By the by, when you return, my friend, it is unnecessary to pass through the garden, for you can always enter, day and night, by the front door, which is only latched."

Then, turning to the gendarmes, he said,—

"Gentlemen, you can retire."

They did so. Jean Valjean looked as if he were on the point of fainting; the Bishop walked up to him, and said in a low voice,—

"Never forget that you have promised me to employ this money in becoming an honest man."

Jean Valjean, who had no recollection of having promised anything, stood silent. The Bishop, who had laid a stress on these words, continued solemnly,—

"Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. I have bought your soul of you. I withdraw it from black thoughts and the spirit of perdition, and give it to GOD."

Jean Valjean was in a state of stupor. Without saying a word, he left the Bishop, and walked hastily across the fields, taking the roads and paths that offered themselves, without perceiving that he was going round and round. He wandered thus the entire morning, and though he had eaten nothing, he did not feel hungry. He was attacked by a multitude of novel sensations; he felt a sort of passion, but he did not know with whom. He could not have said whether he was affected or humiliated; at times a strange softening came over him, against which he strove, and to which he opposed the hardening of the last twenty years.

Indescribable thoughts were thus congregated within him the whole day through. When the sun was setting, and lengthening on the ground the shadow of the smallest pebble, Jean Valjean was sitting behind a bush in a large tawny and utterly-deserted plain. There were only the Alps on the horizon, there was not even the steeple of a distant village. Jean Valjean might be about three leagues from D——, and a path that crossed the plain ran a few paces from the bushes. In the midst of this meditation, which would have contributed no little in rendering his rage formidable to any one who saw him, he heard a sound of mirth. He turned his head and saw a little Savoyard about ten years of age coming along the path with his hurdy-gurdy at his side and his dormouse-box on his back. He was one of those gentle, merry lads who go about from country to country, displaying their knees through the holes in their trousers.

While singing the lad stopped every now and then to play at pitch and toss with some coins he held in his hand, which were probably his entire fortune. Among these coins was a two-franc piece. The lad stopped by the side of the bushes without seeing Jean Valjean, and threw up the handful of sous, all of which he had hitherto always caught on the back of his hand. This time the two-franc piece fell, and rolled up to Jean Valjean, who placed his foot upon it. But the boy had looked after the coin, and seen him do it; he did not seem surprised, but walked straight up to the man. It was an utterly deserted spot; as far as eye could extend there was no one on the plain or the path. Nothing was audible, save the faint cries of a swarm of birds of passage passing through the sky at an immense height. The boy had his back turned to the sun, which wove golden threads in his hair, and suffused Jean Valjean's face with a purpled, blood red hue.

"Sir," the little Savoyard said, with that childish confidence which is composed of ignorance and innocence, "my coin?"

"What is your name?" Jean Valjean said.

"Little Gervais, sir."

"Be off," said Jean Valjean.

"Give me my coin, if you please, sir."

Jean Valjean hung his head, but said nothing.

"My coin," the boy cried, "my silver piece, my money."

It seemed as if Jean Valjean did not hear him, for the boy seized the collar of his blouse and shook him, and at the same time made an effort to remove the iron-shod shoe placed on his coin.

"I want my money, my forty-sous piece."

The boy began crying, and Jean Valjean raised his head. He was still sitting on the ground, and his eyes were misty. He looked at the lad with a sort of amazement, then stretched forth his hand to his stick, and shouted in a terrible voice, "Who is this?"

"I, sir," the boy replied. "Little Gervais; give me back my two francs, if you please. Take away your foot, sir, if you please." Then he grew irritated, though so little, and almost threatening.

"Come, will you remove your foot, I say?"

"Ah, it is you still," said Jean Valjean, and springing up, with his foot still held on the coin, he added, "Will you be off or not?"

The startled boy looked at him, then began trembling from head to foot, and after a few moments of stupor ran off at full speed, without daring to look back or utter a cry. In a few minutes the boy had disappeared. The sun had set, and darkness collected around Jean Valjean. He had eaten nothing all day, and was probably in a fever. Suddenly he started, for he felt the night chill; he pulled his cap over his forehead, mechanically tried to cross and button his blouse, made a step, and stooped to pick up his stick.

At this moment he perceived the two-franc piece, which his foot had half buried in the turf, and which glistened among the pebbles. It had the effect of a galvanic shock upon him. "What is this?" he muttered. He fell back three paces, then stopped, unable to take his eye from the spot his foot had trodden a moment before, as if the thing glistening there in the darkness had an open eye fixed upon him. In a few moments he dashed convulsively at the coin, picked it up, and began looking out into the plain, while shuddering like a straying wild beast which is seeking shelter.

He saw nothing, night was falling, the plain was cold and indistinct, and heavy violet mists rose in the twilight. He set out rapidly in a certain direction, the one in which the lad had gone. After going some thirty yards he stopped, looked and saw nothing; then he shouted with all his strength, "Little Gervais, little Gervais!" He was silent, and waited, but there was no response. The country was deserted and gloomy, and he was surrounded by space. There was nothing but a gloom in which his glance was lost, and a silence in which his voice was lost.

He walked onwards and then began running, but from time to time he stopped, and shouted in the solitude with a voice the most formidable and agonizing that can be imagined: "Little Gervais, little Gervais!" Assuredly, if the boy had heard him, he would have felt frightened, and not have shown himself; but the lad was doubtless a long way off by this time.

When Jean Valjean quitted the Bishop's house he was lifted out of his former thoughts, and could not account for

what was going on within him. He stiffened himself against the angelic deeds and gentle words of the old man: "You have promised me to become an honest man. I purchase your soul; I withdraw it from the spirit of perverseness, and give it to GOD." This incessantly recurred to him, and he opposed to this celestial indulgence that pride which is within us as the fortress of evil. He felt instinctively that this priest's forgiveness was the greatest and most formidable assault by which he had yet been shaken; that his hardening would be permanent if he resisted this clemency; that if he yielded he must renounce that hatred with which the actions of other men had filled his soul during so many years, and which pleased him; that this time he must either conquer or be vanquished, and that the struggle, a colossal and final struggle, had begun between his wickedness and that man's goodness.

In the presence of all these gleams he walked on like a drunken man. While he went on thus with haggard eyes, had he any distinct perception of what the result of his adventure at D——might be? Did he hear all that mysterious buzzing which warns or disturbs the mind at certain moments of life? Did a voice whisper in his ear that he had just gone through the solemn hour of his destiny, that no middle way was now left him, and that if he were not henceforth the best of men he would be the worst; that he must now ascend higher than the bishop, or sink lower than the galley-slave?

One thing which he did not suspect is certain, that he was no longer the same man; all was changed in him, and it was no longer in his power to get rid of the fact that the Bishop had spoken to him and taken his hand. While in this mental condition he met Little Gervais, and robbed him of his two francs: why did he so? assuredly he could not explain it. Was it a final, and as it were supreme, effort of the evil thought he had brought from the bagne, a remainder of impulse, a result of what is called in Statics "acquired force?" It was so, and was perhaps also even less than that. Let us say it simply, it was not he who robbed, it was not the man, but the brute beast that through habit and instinct stupidly placed its foot on the coin, while the intellect was struggling with such novel and extraordinary sensations.

When the intellect woke again and saw this brutish action, Jean Valjean recoiled with agony and uttered a cry of horror. It was a curious phenomenon, and one only possible in the situation he was in, that, in robbing the boy of that money, he committed a deed of which he was no longer capable.

Jean Valjean wept for a long time, and sobbed with more weakness than a woman, more terror than a child. While he wept the light grew brighter in his brain, an extraordinary light, at once ravishing and terrible. His past life, his first fault, his long expiation, his external brutalization, his internal hardening, his liberation, accompanied by so many plans of vengeance, what had happened at the Bishop's, the last thing he had done, the robbery of the boy, a crime the more cowardly and monstrous because it took place after the Bishop's forgiveness—all this recurred to him, but in a light which he had never before seen. He looked at his life, and it appeared to him horrible; at his soul, and it appeared to him frightful. Still a soft light was shed over both, and he fancied that he saw Satan by the light of Paradise.

How many hours did he weep thus? what did he do afterwards? whither did he go? No one ever knew. It was stated, however, that on this very night the mail carrier from Grenoble, who arrived at D—— at about 3 A.M., while passing through the street where the Bishop's Palace stood, saw a man kneeling on the pavement in the attitude of prayer in front of Monseigneur Welcome's door.

CHAPTER III

In the year 1817 four young Parisians played a capital joke. These Parisians came, one from Toulouse, the second from Limoges, the third from Cahors, the fourth from Montauban, but they were students, and thus Parisians; for studying in Paris is being born in Paris. These young men were insignificant, four every-day specimens, neither good nor bad, wise nor ignorant, geniuses nor idiots.

The names of these Oscars were Felix Tholomyès, Listolier, Fameuil, and Blachevelle. Of course each had a mistress; Blachevelle loved Favorite, so called because she had been to England; Listolier adored Dahlia, who had taken the

name of a flower for her *nom de guerre;* Fameuil idolized Zephine, an abridgement of Josephine; while Tholomyès had Fantine, called the Blonde, owing to her magnificent sun-coloured hair. Favorite, Dahlia, Zephine, and Fantine were four exquisitely pretty girls, still to some extent work-women. They had not entirely laid down the needle, and though deranged by their amourettes, they still had in their faces a remnant of the serenity of toil, and in their souls that flower of honesty which in a woman survives the first fall. One of the four was called the young one, because she was the youngest, and one called the old one, who was only three-and-twenty. To conceal nothing, the three first were more experienced, more reckless, and had flown further into the noise of life than Fantine the Blonde, who was still occupied with her first illusion.

Fantine was one of those beings who spring up from the dregs of the people; issuing from the lowest depths of the social darkness, she had on her forehead the stamp of the anonymous and the unknown. She was born at M. sur M.; of what parents? who could say? she had never known either father or mother. She called herself Fantine, and why Fantine? she was never known by any other name. At the period of her birth, the Directory was still in existence. She had no family name, as she had no family; and no Christian name, as the Church was abolished. She accepted the name given her by the first passer-by who saw her running barefooted about the streets. She was called little Fantine, and no one knew any more. This human creature came into the world in that way. At the age of ten, Fantine left the town, and went into service with farmers in the neighbourhood. At the age of fifteen she went to Paris, "to seek her fortune." Fantine was pretty and remained pure as long as she could. She was a charming blonde, with handsome teeth; she had gold and pearls for her dower, but the gold was on her head, and the pearls in her mouth.

She worked for a livelihood; and then she loved, still for the sake of living, for the heart is hungry too. She loved Tholomyès; it was a pastime for him, but a passion with her. The streets of the Quartier Latin, which are thronged with students and grisettes, saw the beginning of this dream. Fantine, in the labyrinth of the Pantheon Hill, where so

many adventures are fastened and unfastened, long shunned Tholomyès, but in such a way as to meet him constantly. There is a manner of avoiding which resembles seeking—in a word, the eclogue was played.

Blachevelle, Listolier, and Fameuil formed a sort of group, of which Tholomyès was the head, for it was he who had the wit. Tholomyès was the antique old student; he was rich, for he had an income of 4000 francs a year, a splendid scandal on the Montagne St. Geneviève. Tholomyès was a man of the world, thirty years of age, and in a bad state of preservation. He was wrinkled and had lost teeth, and he had an incipient baldness, of which himself said without sorrow: "The skull at thirty, the knee at forty." He had but a poor digestion, and one of his eyes was permanently watery. But in proportion as his youth was extinguished, his gaiety became brighter; he substituted jests for his teeth, joy for his hair, irony for his health, and his weeping eye laughed incessantly. One day Tholomyès took the other three aside, made an oracular gesture, and said—

"It is nearly a year that Fantine, Dahlia, Zephine, and Favorite have been asking us to give them a surprise, and we promised solemnly to do so. They are always talking about it, especially to me. In the same way as the old women of Naples cry to Saint Januarius, 'Yellow face, perform your miracle!' our beauties incessantly say to me, 'Tholomyès, when will you be delivered of your surprise?' At the same time our parents are writing to us, so let us kill two birds with one stone. The moment appears to me to have arrived, so let us talk it over."

Upon this, Tholomyès lowered his voice, and mysteriously uttered something so amusing that a mighty and enthusiastic laugh burst from four mouths simultaneously, and Blachevelle exclaimed, "That is an idea!" An *estaminet* full of smoke presenting itself, they went in, and the remainder of their conference was lost in the tobacco clouds. The result of the gloom was a brilliant pleasure excursion, that took place on the following Sunday, to which the four young men invited their girls.

It is difficult to form an idea at the present day of what a pleasure party of students and grisettes was four-and-forty years ago. Paris has no longer the same environs; the face

of what may be termed circum-Parisian life has completely changed during half a century; where there was the coucou, there is a railway-carriage; where there was the fly-boat, there is now the steamer; people talk of Fécamp as people did in those days of St. Cloud. Paris of 1862 is a city which has France for its suburbs.

The four couples conscientiously accomplished all the rustic follies possible at that day. It was a bright warm summer day; they rose at five o'clock; then they went to St. Cloud in the stage coach, looked at the dry cascade, and exclaimed, "That must be grand when there is water;" breakfasted at the Tête Noire, where Castaing had not yet put up, ran at the ring in the Quincunx of the great basin, ascended into the Diogenes lantern, gambled for macaroons at the roulette board by the Sêvres bridge, culled posies at Puteaux, bought reed-pipes at Neuilly, ate apple tarts everywhere, and were prefectly happy. The girls prattled and chattered like escaped linnets; they were quite wild, and every now and then gave the young men little taps.

Fantine was the personification of joy. Her splendid teeth had evidently been made for laughter by nature. She carried in her hand, more willingly than on her head, her little straw bonnet, with its long streamers. Her thick, light hair, inclined to float, and which had to be done up continually, seemed made for the flight of Galatea under the willows. Her rosy lips prattled enchantingly; the corners of her mouth voluptuously raised, as in the antique masks of Erigone, seemed to encourage boldness; but her long eye-lashes, full of shade, were discreetly lowered upon the seductiveness of the lower part of the face, as if to command respect. Her whole toilet had something flaming about it; she had on a dress of mauve barége, little buskin slippers, whose strings formed an X on her fine, open-worked stockings, and that sort of muslin spencer, a Marseillais invention, whose name of canezou, a corrupted pronunication of *quinze Août* at the Cannebière, signifies fine weather and heat. The three others, who were less timid, as we said, bravely wore low-necked dresses, which in summer are very graceful and attractive, under bonnets covered with flowers; but by the side of this bold dress, Fantine's canezou, with its transparency, indiscretion, and reticences, at once concealing and displaying,

seemed a provocative invention of decency; and the famous court of Love, presided over by the Viscomtesse de Cette with the sea-green eyes, would have probably bestowed the prize for coquettishness on this canezou, which competed for that of chastity. The simplest things are frequently the cleverest.

We have said that Fantine was joy itself; she was also modesty. Any one who watched her closely would have seen, through all this intoxication of youth, the season, and love, an invincible expression of restraint and modesty. She remained slightly astonished, and this chaste astonishment distinguishes Psyche from Venus. Fantine had the long white delicate fingers of the Vestal who stirs up the sacred fire with a golden bodkin. Though she had refused nothing, as we shall soon see, to Tholomyès, her face, when in repose, was supremely virginal; a species of stern and almost austere dignity suddenly invaded it at certain hours, and nothing was so singular and affecting as to see gaiety so rapidly extinguished on it, and contemplation succeed cheerfulness without any transition. This sudden gravity, which was at times sternly marked, resembled the disdain of a goddess. Her forehead, nose, and chin offered that equilibrum of outline which is very distinct from the equilibrum of proportion, and produces the harmony of the face; in the characteristic space between the base of the nose and the upper lip, she had that imperceptible and charming curve, that mysterious sign of chastity, which made Barbarossa fall in love with a Diana found in the ruins of Iconium. Love is a fault; be it so; but Fantine was innocence floating on the surface of the fault.

The four happy couples enjoyed the sun, the fields, the flowers, and the trees. And in this community of Paradise, three of the girls, while singing, talking, dancing, chasing butterflies, picking bindweed, wetting their stockings in the tall grass, fresh, mad-cap, but not dissolute, received kisses from all the gentlemen in turn. Fantine alone was shut up in her vague dreamy resistance, and loved. "You always look strange," Favorite said to her.

At about three o'clock, the four couples, wild with delight, turned into the Montagnes Russes, a singular building, which at that time occupied the heights of Beaujon and whose winding line could be seen over the trees of the Champs Elysées. From time to time Favorite exclaimed,—

"Where's the surprise? I insist on the surprise."

"Have patience," Tholomyès answered.

The Russian mountain exhausted, they thought about dinner, and the radiant eight, at length somewhat weary, put into the Cabaret Bombarda, an offshoot established in the Champs Elysées by that famous restaurateur Bombarda, whose sign could be seen at that time at the Rue de Rivoli by the side of the Delorme Passage.

A large, but ugly room, with an alcove and a bed at the end (owing to the crowded state of the houses on Sundays they were compelled to put up with it); two windows from which the quay and river could be contemplated through the elm-trees; a magnificent autumn sun illumining the windows; two tables, on one of them a triumphal mountain of bottles, mixed up with hats and bonnets, at the other one four couples joyously seated round a mass of dishes, plates, bottles, and glasses, pitchers of beer, mingled with wine bottles; but little order on the table, and some amount of disorder under it.

"Ils faisaient sous la table
Un bruit, un trique-trac de pieds epouvantable,"

as Molière says. Such was the state of the pastoral which began at 5 a.m.; at half-past 4 p.m. the sun was declining and appetite was satisfied.

Love talk and table talk are equally indescribable, for the first is a cloud, the second smoke. Fantine and Dahlia were humming a tune, Tholomyès was drinking, Zephine laughing, Fantine smiling, Listolier was blowing a penny trumpet bought at St. Cloud, Favorite was looking tenderly at Blachevelle and saying—

"Blachevelle, I adore you."

This led to Blachevelle asking,—

"What would you do, Favorite, if I ceased to love you?"

"I?" Favorite exclaimed, "oh, do not say that, even in fun! if you ceased to love me I would run after you, throw water over you, and have you arrested."

Blachevelle smiled with the voluptuous fatuity of a man whose self-esteem is tickled. Dahlia, while still eating, whispered to Favorite through the noise,—

"You seem to be very fond of your Blachevelle?"

"I detest him," Favorite answered in the same key, as

she seized her fork again. "He is miserly, and I prefer the little fellow who lives opposite to me. He is a very good-looking young man; do you know him? It is easy to see that he wants to be an actor, and I am fond of actors. No matter, I tell Blachevelle that I adore him: what a falsehood, eh, what a falsehood!"

After a pause, Favorite continued,—

"Dahlia, look you, I am sad. It has done nothing but rain all the summer: the wind annoys me, Blachevelle is excessively mean, there are hardly any green peas in the market, one does not know what to eat; I have the spleen, as the English say, for butter is so dear, and then it is horrifying that we are dining in a room with a bed in it, and that disgusts me with life."

At length, when all were singing noisily, or talking all together, Tholomyès interfered.

"Let us not talk hap-hazard or too quickly," he exclaimed, "we must not meditate if we desire to be striking; too much improvisation stupidly empties the mind. Gentlemen, no haste; let us mingle majesty with our gaiety, eat contemplatively, and let *festina lentè* be our rule. We must not hurry. Look at the Spring, if it goes ahead too fast it is floored, that is to say, nipped by frost. Excessive zeal ruins the peach and apricot trees; excessive zeal kills the grace and joy of good dinners. No zeal, gentlemen; Grimaud de la Reynière is of the same opinion as Talleyrand."

A dull rebellion broke out in the party.

"Tholomyès, leave us at peace," said Blachevelle.

"Down with the tyrant," said Fameuil.

"Sunday exists," Listolier added.

"We are sober," Fameuil remarked again.

"Tholomyès," said Blachevelle, "regard my calmness" (*mon calme*).

"You are the Marquis of that ilk," Tholomyès replied. This poor pun produced the effect of a stone thrown into a pond. The Marquis de Montcalm was a celebrated Royalist at that day. All the frogs were silent.—

"My friends," Tholomyès shouted with the accent of a man who is recapturing his empire, "recover yourself: too great stupor should not greet this pun which has fallen from the clouds, for everything that falls in such a manner is not

necessarily worthy of enthusiasm and respect. Far be it from me to insult puns: I honour them according to their deserts, and no more. All the most august, sublime, and charming members of humanity have made puns: as, for instance, Æschylus on Polynices, and Cleopatra on Octavius. And note the fact that Cleopatra's pun preceded the battle of Actium, and that, were it not for that pun, no one would know the town of Toryne, a Greek word signifying a pot-ladle. This granted, I return to my exhortation. Brethren, I repeat, no zeal, no row, no excess, not even in puns, fun, and playing upon words. Listen to me, for I possess the prudence of Amphiaraüs and the baldness of Cæsar; a limit must even be placed on the rebus, for *est modus in rebus.* There must be a limit even to dinners; you are fond of apple-puffs, ladies, but no abuse; even in the matter of apple-puffs, good sense and art are needed. Gluttony chastises the glutton; *gula* punishes *gulax.* Indigestion was sent into the world to read a lecture to our stomachs; and, bear this in mind, each of our passions, even love, has a stomach which must not be filled too full. In all things, we must write betimes the word *finis,* we must restrain ourselves when it becomes urgent, put a bolt on our appetites, lock up our fancy, and place ourselves under arrest. The wise man is he who knows how, at a given moment, to arrest himself."

At this moment, Favorite crossed her arms, and threw her head back; she then looked boldly at Tholomyès, and said:

"Well, how about the surprise?"

"That is true, the hour has arrived," Tholomyès answered. "Gentlemen, it is time to surprise the ladies. Pray wait for us a moment."

"It begins with a kiss," said Blachevelle.

"On the forehead," Tholomyès added.

Each solemnly kissed the forehead of his mistress: then they proceeded to the door in Indian file, with a finger on their lip. Favorite clapped her hands as they went out.

"It is amusing already," she said.

"Do not be long," Fantine murmured, "we are waiting for you."

The girls, when left alone, leant out of the windows, two by two, talking, looking out, and wondering. They watched the young men leave the Bombarda cabaret arm in arm; they

turned round, made laughing signs, and disappeared in that dusty Sunday mob which once a week invaded the Champs Elysées.

"Do not be long," Fantine cried.

"What will they bring us?" said Zephine.

"I am certain it will be pretty," said Dahlia.

"For my part," Favorite added, "I hope it will be set in gold."

They were soon distracted by the movement on the quay, which they could notice through the branches of the lofty trees, and which greatly amused them. It was the hour for the mail-carts and stages to start, and nearly all those bound for the South and West at that time passed through the Champs Elysées. Every moment some heavy vehicle, painted yellow and black, heavily loaded and rendered shapeless by trunks and valises, dashed through the crowd with the sparks of a forge, the dust representing the smoke. This confusion amused the girls.

One of these vehicles, which could hardly be distinguished through the branches, stopped for a moment, and then started again at a gallop. This surprised Fantine.

"That is strange," she said, "I fancied that the diligence never stopped."

Favorite shrugged her shoulders.

"This Fantine is really amazing, and is surprised at the simplest things. Let us suppose that I am a traveller and say to the guard of the stage coach, 'I will walk on, and you can pick me up on the quay as you pass.' The coach passes, sees me, stops and takes me in. That is done every day; you are ignorant of life, my dear."

Some time elapsed; all at once Favorite started as if waking from sleep.

"Well," she said, "where is the surprise?"

"Oh yes," Dahlia continued, "the famous surprise."

"They are a long time," said Fantine.

Just as Fantine had ended this sigh, the waiter who had served the dinner came in; he held in his hand something that resembled a letter.

"What is that?" Favorite asked.

The waiter answered,—

"It is a paper which the gentlemen left for you, ladies."

"Why did you not bring it to us at once?"

"Because the gentlemen," the waiter went on, "ordered that it should not be delivered to you for an hour."

Favorite snatched the paper from the waiter's hands, it was really a letter.

"Stay," she said, "there is no address, but the following words are written on it: THIS IS THE SURPRISE." She quickly opened the letter and read (she could read).

"Well-beloved!

"Know that we have relatives: perhaps you are not perfectly cognizant what they are; it means fathers and mothers in the civil, puerile, and honest code. Well, these relatives are groaning; these old people claim us as their own; these worthy men and women call us prodigal sons. They desire our return home, and offer to kill the fatted calf. We obey them, as we are virtuous; at the hour when you read this, five impetuous steeds will be conveying us back to our papas and mammas. We are going, to quote the language of Bossuet; we are going, gone. We are flying away in the arms of Laffitte and on the wings of Caillard. The Toulouse coach is dragging us away from the abyss, and that abyss is yourselves, pretty dears. We are re-entering society, duty, and order, at a sharp trot, and at the rate of nine miles an hour. It is important for our country that we should become, like everybody else, Prefects, fathers of a family, gamekeepers, and Councillors of State. Revere us, for we are sacrificing ourselves. Dry up your tears for us rapidly, and get a substitute speedily. If this letter lacerates your hearts, treat it in the same fashion. Good bye. For nearly two years we rendered you happy, so do not owe us any grudge.

(Signed) Blachevelle.
Fameuil.
Listolier.

"PS. The dinner is paid for. Felix Tholomyès."

The four girls looked at each other, and Favorite was the first to break the silence.

"I don't care," she said, "it is a capital joke. It must have been Blachevelle who had that idea, it makes me in love with him. So soon as he has left me I am beginning to grow fond of him; the old story."

"No," said Dahlia, "that is an idea of Tholomyès. That can be easily seen."

"In that case," Favorite retorted, "down with Blachevelle, and long live Tholomyès!"

And they burst into a laugh, in which Fantine joined; an hour later though, when she returned to her bed-room, she burst into tears: he was, as we have said, her first love; she had yielded to Tholomyès as to a husband, and the poor girl had a child.

There was in the first quarter of this century a sort of pot-house at Montfermeil, near Paris, which no longer exists. It was kept by a couple of the name of Thénardier, and was situated in the Rue du Boulanger. Over the door a board was nailed to the wall, and on this board was painted something resembling a man carrying on his back another man, who wore large gilt general's epaulettes with silver stars; red dabs represented blood, and the rest of the painting was smoke, probably representing a battle. At the bottom could be read the inscription: THE SERGEANT OF WATERLOO.

Though nothing is more common than a cart at a pot-house door, the vehicle, or rather fragment of a vehicle, which blocked up the street in front of the *Sergeant of Waterloo*, one spring evening in 1818, would have certainly attracted the attention of any painter who had passed that way. It was the fore-part of one of those wains used in wood countries for dragging planks and trunks of trees; it was composed of a massive iron axle-tree, in which a heavy pole was imbedded and supported by two enormous wheels. The whole thing was sturdy, crushing, and ugly, and it might have passed for the carriage of a monster gun. The ruts had given the wheels, felloes, spokes, axle-trees, and pole, a coating of mud, a hideous yellow plaster, much like that with which cathedrals are so often adorned. The wood-work was hidden by mud and the iron by rust. Under the axle-tree was festooned a heavy chain, suited for a convict Goliath. This chain made you think, not of the wood it was intended to secure, but of the mastodons and mammoths for which it would have served as harness; it had the air of a cyclopean and superhuman bagne and seemed removed from some monster. Homer would have bound Polyphemus with it, and Shakespeare, Caliban.

Why was this thing at this place in the street? First, to block it up; secondly, to finish the rusting process. There is in the old social order, a multitude of institutions which may be found in the same way in the open air, and which have no other reasons for being there. The centre of the chain hung rather close to the ground, and on the curve, as on the rope of a swing, two little girls were seated on this evening, in an exquisite embrace, one about two years and a half, the other eighteen months; the younger being in the arms of the elder. An artfully-tied handkerchief prevented them from falling, for a mother had seen this frightful chain, and said, "What a famous plaything for my children!" The two children, who were prettily dressed and with some taste, were radiant; they looked like two roses among old iron; their eyes were a triumph, their healthy cheeks laughed; one had auburn hair, the other was a brunette; their innocent faces had a look of surprise; a flowering shrub a little distance off sent to passers-by a perfume which seemed to come from them; and the younger displayed her nudity with the chaste indecency of childhood. Above and around their two delicate heads, moulded in happiness and bathed in light, the gigantic wain, black with rust, almost terrible, and bristling with curves and savage angles, formed the porch of a cavern, as it were. A few yards off, and seated in the inn door, the mother, a woman of no very pleasing appearance, but touching at this moment, was swinging the children by the help of a long cord, and devouring them with her eyes, for fear of an accident, with that animal and heavenly expression peculiar to maternity. At each oscillation the hideous links produced a sharp sound, resembling a cry of anger. The little girls were delighted; the setting sun mingled with the joy, and nothing could be so charming as this caprice of accident which had made of a Titanic chain a cherub's swing. While playing with her little ones, the mother sang, terribly out of tune, a romance, very celebrated at that day,—

"Il le faut, disait un guerrier."

Her song and contemplation of her daughters prevented her hearing and seeing what took place in the street. Some one, however, had approached her, as she began the first couplets

of a romance, and suddenly she heard a voice saying close to her ear,—

"You have two pretty children, Madame."

"—a la belle et tendre Imogène,"

the mother answered, continuing her song, and then turned her head. A woman was standing a few paces from her, who also had a child, which she was carrying in her arms. She also carried a heavy bag. This woman's child was one of the most divine creatures possible to behold; she was a girl between two and three years of age, and could have vied with the two other little ones in the coquettishness of her dress. She had on a hood of fine linen, ribbons at her shoulders, and Valenciennes lace in her cap. Her raised petticoats displayed her white, dimpled, fine thigh. Her eyes were very large, and she had magnificent lashes, for she was asleep. She was sleeping with the absolute confidence peculiar to her age; a mother's arms are made of tenderness, and children sleep soundly in them. As for the mother, she looked grave and sorrowful, and was dressed like a work-girl who was trying to become a country-woman again. She was young; was she pretty? perhaps so; but in this dress she did not appear so. Her hair, a light lock of which peeped out, seemed very thick, but was completely hidden beneath a nun's hood; ugly, tight, and fastened under her chin. Her eyes looked as if they had not been dry for a long time; she had a fatigued and rather sickly air, and she looked at the child sleeping in her arms in the manner peculiar to a mother who has suckled her babe. A large blue handkerchief like those served out to the invalids, folded like a shawl, clumsily hid her shape. Her hands were rough and covered with red spots, and her fore-finger was hardened and torn by the needle. She had on a brown cloth cloak, a cotton gown, and heavy shoes. It was Fantine.

It was difficult to recognize her, but, after an attentive examination, she still possessed her beauty. As for her toilette, that aerian toilette of muslin and ribbons which seemed made of gaiety, folly, and music, to be full of bells, and perfumed with lilacs,—it had faded away like the dazzling hoar-frost which looks like diamonds in the sun; it melts, and leaves the branch quite black.

Fantine remained alone when the father of her child had gone away—alas! such ruptures are irrevocable. She found herself absolutely isolated; she had lost her habit of working, and had gained a taste for pleasure. Led away by her *liaison* with Tholomyès to despise the little trade she knew, she had neglected her connexion, and it was lost. She had no resource. Fantine could hardly read, and could not write; she had been merely taught in childhood to sign her name, and she had sent a letter to Tholomyès, then a second, then a third, through a public writer, but Tholomyès did not answer one of them. One day Fantine heard the gossips say, while looking at her daughter, "Children like that are not regarded seriously, people shrug their shoulders at them." Then she thought of Tholomyès, who shrugged his shoulders at her child, and did not regard the innocent creature seriously, and her heart turned away from this man. What was she to do now? She knew not where to turn. She had committed a fault, but the foundation of her nature, we must remember, was modesty and virtue. She felt vaguely that she was on the eve of falling into distress, and gliding into worse. She needed courage, and she had it. The idea occurred to her of returning to her native town M. sur M. There some one might know her, and give her work; but she must hide her fault. And she vaguely glimpsed at the possible necessity of a separation more painful still than the first; her heart was contracted, but she formed her resolution. Fantine, as we shall see, possessed the stern bravery of life. She had already valiantly given up dress; she dressed in calico, and had put all her silk ribbons and laces upon her daughter, the only vanity left her, and it was a holy one. She sold all she possessed, which brought her in 200 francs; and when she had paid her little debts, she had only about 80 francs left. At the age of two-and-twenty, on a fine Spring morning, she left Paris, carrying her child on her back. Any one who had seen them pass would have felt pity for them; the woman had nothing in the world but her child, and the child nothing but her mother in her world. Fantine had suckled her child; this had bent her chest, and she was coughing a little.

About mid-day, after resting herself now and then by travelling from time to time, at the rate of three or four leagues an hour, in what were then called the "little vehicles

of the suburbs of Paris," Fantine found herself at Montfermeil. As she passed the *Sergeant of Waterloo*, the two little girls in their monster swing had dazzled her, and she stopped before this vision of joy. She looked at them with great emotion, for the presence of angels in an announcement of Paradise. These two little creatures were evidently happy! She looked then, and admired them with such tenderness that at the moment when the mother was drawing breath between two verses of her song, she could not refrain from saying to her what we have already recorded.

"You have two pretty children, Madame."

The most ferocious creatures are disarmed by a caress given to their little ones. The mother raised her head, thanked her, and bade her sit down on the door bench. The two women began talking.

"My name is Madame Thénardier," the mother of the little ones said, "we keep this inn."

This Madame Thénardier was a red-headed, thin, angular woman, the soldier's wife in all its ugliness, and, strange to say, with a languishing air which she owed to reading romances. She was a finikin woman, for old romances, by working on the imaginations of landladies, produce that effect. She was still young, scarce thirty. If this woman, now sitting, had been standing up, perhaps her height and colossal proportions, fitting for a show, would have at once startled the traveller, destroyed her confidence, and prevented what we have to record. A person sitting instead of standing up—destinies hang on this.

The woman told her story with some modification. She was a work-girl, her husband was dead; she could get no work in Paris, and was going to seek it elsewhere, in her native town. She had left Paris that very morning on foot; as she felt tired from carrying her child, she had travelled by the stage coach to Villemomble, from that place she walked to Montfermeil. The little one had walked a little, but not much, for she was so young, and so she had been obliged to carry her, and the darling had gone to sleep,—and as she said this she gave her daughter a passionate kiss, which awoke her. The babe opened her eyes, large blue eyes like her mother's, and gazed with that serious air of infants, which is a mystery of their luminous innocence in the presence of our twilight virtues. Then the

child began laughing, and, though its mother had to check it, slipped down to the ground with the undauntable energy of a little creature wishing to run. All at once, she noticed the other two children in their swing, stopped short, and put out her tongue as a sign of admiration. Mother Thénardier unfastened her children, took them out of the swing, and said,—

"Play about all three."

Such ages soon grow tame, and in a minute the little Thénardiers were playing with the new comer at making holes in the ground, which was an immense pleasure. The stranger child was very merry; the goodness of the mother is written in the gaiety of the baby. She had picked up a piece of wood which she used as a spade, and was energetically digging a grave large enough for a fly. The two went on talking.

"What's the name of your bantling?"

"Cosette."

For Cosette read Euphrasie, for that was the child's real name, but the mother had converted Euphrasie into Cosette, through that gentle, graceful instinct peculiar to mothers and the people, which changes Josefa into Pepita, and Françoise into Sellette. It is a species of derivation which deranges and disconcerts the entire science of etymologists. We know a grandmother who contrived to make out of Theodore, Gnon.

"What is her age?"

"Going on for three."

"Just the same age as my eldest."

"How soon children get to know one another," Mother Thénardier exclaimed; "why, they might be taken for three sisters."

The word was probably the spark which the other mother had been waiting for; she seized the speaker's hand, looked at her fixedly, and said,—

"Will you take charge of my child for me?"

The woman gave one of those starts of surprise which are neither assent nor refusal. Fantine continued,—

"Look ye, I cannot take the child with me to my town for when a woman has a baby, it is a hard matter for her to get a situation. People are so foolish in our part. It was Heaven that made me pass in front of your inn; when I saw your little ones so pretty, so clean, so happy, it gave me a turn. I said to myself. 'She is a kind mother.' It is so!

they will be three sisters. Then I shall not be long before I come back. Will you take care of my child ? "

" We will see," said Mother Thénardier.

" I would pay six francs a month."

Here a man's voice cried from the back of the tap-room,—

" Can't be done under seven, and six months paid in advance."

" Six times seven are forty-two," said the landlady.

" I will pay it," said the mother.

" And seventeen francs in addition for extra expenses," the man's voice added.

" Total fifty-seven francs," said Madame Thénardier, and through these figures she sang vaguely,—

" Il le faut disait un guerrier."

" I will pay it," the mother said ; " I have eighty francs, and shall have enough left to get home on foot. I shall earn money there, and so soon as I have a little I will come and fetch my darling."

The man's voice continued,—

" Has the little one a stock of clothing ? "

" It is my husband," said Mother Thénardier.

" Of course she has clothes, poor little treasure. I saw it was your husband ; and a fine stock of clothes too, a wonderful stock, a dozen of everything, and silk frocks like a lady. The things are in my bag."

" They must be handed over," the man's voice remarked.

" Of course they must," said the mother, " it would be funny if I left my child naked."

The master's face appeared.

" All right," he said.

The bargain was concluded, the mother spent the night at the inn, paid her money and left her child, fastened up her bag, which was now light, and started the next morning with the intention of returning soon. Such departures are arranged calmly, but they entail despair. A neighbour's wife saw the mother going away, and went home saying,—

" I have just seen a woman crying in the street as if her heart was broken."

When Cosette's mother had gone, the man said to his wife,—

" That money will meet my bill for one hundred and ten

francs, which falls due to-morrow, and I was fifty francs short. It would have been protested, and I should have had a bailiff put in. You set a famous mouse-trap with your brats."

"Without suspecting it," said the woman.

This Thénardier, could he be believed, had been a soldier—sergeant, he said; he had probably gone through the campaign of 1815, and had even behaved rather bravely, as it seems. We shall see presently how the matter really stood. The sign of his inn was an allusion to one of his exploits, and he had painted it himself, for he could do a little of everything—badly. His wife was some twelve or fifteen years younger than he, and when her romantically flowing locks began to grow grey, she was only a stout wicked woman who had been pampered with foolish romances. As such absurdities cannot be read with impunity, the result was that her eldest daughter was christened Eponine; as for the younger, the poor girl was all but named Gulnare, and owed it to a fortunate diversion made by a romance of Ducray Duménil's, that she was only christened Azelma.

It is not enough to be bad in order to prosper: and the pot-house was a failure. Thanks to the fifty-seven francs, Thénardier had been able to avoid a protest, and honour his signature; but the next month they wanted money again, and his wife took to Paris and pledged Cosette's outfit for sixty francs. So soon as this sum was spent, the Thénardiers grew accustomed to see in the little girl a child they had taken in through charity, and treated her accordingly. As she had no clothes, she was dressed in the left-off chemises and petticoats of the little Thénardiers, that is to say, in rags. She was fed on the leavings of everybody, a little better than the dog, and a little worse than the cat.

The mother, who had settled, as we shall see hereafter, at M. sur M., wrote, or, to speak more correctly, had letters written every month to inquire after her child. The Thénardiers invariably replied that Cosette was getting on famously. When the first six months had passed, the mother sent seven francs for the seventh month, and continued to send the money punctually month by month. The year was not ended before Thénardier said, "A fine thing that! what does she expect us to do with seven francs!" and he wrote to demand twelve. The mother, whom they persuaded that

her child was happy and healthy, submitted, and sent the twelve francs.

Some natures cannot love on one side without hating on the other. Mother Thénardier passionately loved her own two daughters, which made her detest the stranger. This woman, like many women of her class, had a certain amount of caresses and another of blows and insults to expend daily. If she had not had Cosette, it is certain that her daughters, though they were idolized, would have received the entire amount, but the strange child did the service of diverting the blows on herself, while the daughters only received the caresses. Cosette did not make a movement that did not bring down on her head a hailstorm of violent and unmerited chastisement. The poor weak child, unnecessarily punished, scolded, cuffed, and beaten, saw by her side two little creatures like herself who lived in radiant happiness.

As Madame Thénardier was unkind to Cosette, Eponine and Azelma were the same; for children, at that age, are copies of their mother; the form is smaller, that is all. A year passed, then another, and people said in the village,—

"Those Thénardiers are worthy people. They are not well off, and yet they bring up a poor child left on their hands."

Cosette was supposed to be deserted by her mother; Thénardier, however, having learnt in some obscure way that the child was probably illegitimate, and that the mother could not confess it, insisted on 15 francs a month, saying that the creature was growing and eating, and threatening to send her back. "She must not play the fool with me," he shouted, "or I'll let her brat fall like a bomb-shell into her hiding-place. I must have an increase." The mother paid the 15 francs. Year by year the child grew, and so did her wretchedness: so long as Cosette was little, she was the scape-goat of the two other children; so soon as she began to be developed a little, that is to say, even before she was five years old, she became the servant of the house. At five years, the reader will say, that is improbable, but, alas! it is true. Social suffering begins at any age. Have we not recently seen the trial of a certain Dumollard, an orphan, who turned bandit, and who from the age of five, as the official documents tell us, was alone in the world and "worked for a living and stole?"

Cosette was made to go on messages, sweep the rooms,

the yard, the street, wash the dishes, and even carry heavy bundles. The Thénardiers considered themselves the more justified in acting thus, because the mother, who was still at M. sur M., was beginning to pay badly, and was several months in arrear.

If the mother had returned to Montfermeil at the end of three years, she would not have recognized her child. Cosette, so pretty and ruddy on her arrival in this house, was now thin and sickly. She had a timid look about her. Injustice had made her sulky, and wretchedness had made her ugly. Nothing was left her but her fine eyes, which were painful to look at, because, as they were so large, it seemed as if a greater amount of sadness was visible in them. It was a heart-rending sight to see this poor child, scarce six years of age, shivering in winter under her calico rags, and sweeping the street before daybreak, with an enormous broom in her small red hands and a tear in her large eyes.

The country people called her "the lark," the lower classes, who are fond of metaphors, had given the name to the poor little creature, who was no larger than a bird, trembling, frightened, and starting, who was always the first awake in the house and the village, and ever in the street or the fields by daybreak.

There was this difference, however,—this poor lark did not sing.

What had become of the mother, who, according to the people of Montfermeil, appeared to have deserted her child? After leaving her little Cosette with the Thénardiers, she had continued her journey and arrived at M. sur M. Fantine had been away from her province for ten years, and while she had been slowly descending from misery to misery, her native town had prospered. About two years before, one of those industrial facts which are the events of small towns had taken place. The details are important, and we think it useful to develop them, we might almost say, to understand them.

From time immemorial M. sur M. had as a special trade the imitation of English jet and German black beads. This trade had hitherto only vegetated, owing to the dearness of the material, which re-acted on the artizan. At the moment when Fantine returned to M. sur M. an extraordinary trans-

formation had taken place in the production of "black articles." Toward the close of 1815, a man, a stranger, had settled in the town, and had the idea of substituting in this trade gum lac for rosin, and in bracelets particularly, scraps of bent plate for welded plate. This slight change was a revolution, it prodigiously reduced the cost of the material, which, in the first place, allowed the wages to be raised, a benefit for the town; secondly, improved the manufacture, an advantage for the consumer; and, thirdly, allowed the goods to be sold cheap, while producing them the profit, an advantage for the manufacturer.

In less than three years the inventor of the process had become rich, which is a good thing, and had made all rich about him, which is better. He was a stranger in the department; no one knew anything about his origin, and but little about his start. It was said that he had entered the town with but very little money, a few hundred francs at the most; but with this small capital, placed at the service of an ingenious idea, and fertilized by regularity and thought, he made his own fortune and that of the town. On his arrival at M. sur M. he had the dress, manners, and language of a working man. It appears that on the very December night when he obscurely entered M. sur M. with his knapsack on his back, and a knotted stick in his hand, a great fire broke out in the Town Hall. This man rushed into the midst of the flames, and at the risk of his life saved two children who happened to belong to the captain of the gendarmes; hence no one dreamed of asking for his passport. On this occasion his name was learned; he called himself Father Madeleine. He was a man of about fifty, with a preoccupied air, and he was good-hearted. That was all that could be said of him.

Thanks to the rapid progress of this trade which he had so admirably remodelled, M. sur M. had become a place of considerable trade. Father Madeleine's profits were so great, that after the second year, he was able to build a large factory, in which were two spacious workshops, one for men, the other for women. Any one who was hungry need only to come, and was sure to find there employment and bread. Father Madeleine expected from the men good-will, from the women purity, and from all probity. He had divided the workshops in order to separate the sexes, and enable the

women and girls to remain virtuous. This sternness was the more justifiable because M. sur M. was a garrison town, and opportunities for corruption abounded.

As we have said, in the midst of this activity, of which he was the cause, Father Madeleine made his fortune, but, singularly enough in a plain man of business, this did not appear to be his chief care; he seemed to think a great deal of others, and but little of himself. In 1820, he was known to have a sum of 630,000 francs in Lafitte's bank; but before he put that amount on one side he had spent more than a million for the town and the poor. The hospital was badly endowed, and he added ten beds. M. sur M. is divided into an upper and a lower town; the latter, in which he lived, had only one school, a poor tenement falling into ruins, and he built two, one for boys and one for girls. He paid the two teachers an amount the double of their poor official salary, and to some one who expressed surprise, he said, "The two first functionaries of the State are the nurse and the schoolmaster." He had established at his own charges a hospice, a thing at that time almost unknown in France, and a charitable fund for old and infirm workmen. As his factory was a centre, a new district, in which there was a large number of indigent families, rapidly sprang up around it, and he opened there a free Dispensary.

In 1819, the report spread one morning through the town that, on the recommendation of the Prefect, and in consideration of services rendered the town, Father Madeleine was about to be nominated by the King, Mayor of M. Those who had declared the new-comer an ambitious man, eagerly seized this opportunity to exclaim, "Did we not say so?" All M. was in an uproar; for the rumour was well founded. A few days after, the appointment appeared in the *Moniteur*, and the next day Father Madeleine declined the honour. In the same year, the new processes worked by him were shown at the Industrial Exhibition; and on the report of the jury, the King made the inventor a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. There was a fresh commotion in the little town; "Well, it was the cross he wanted," but Father Madeleine declined the cross. Decidedly the man was an enigma, but charitable souls got out of the difficulty by saying, "After all he is a sort of adventurer."

In 1820, five years after his arrival at M., the services he had rendered the town were so brilliant, the will of the whole country was so unanimous, that the King again nominated him Mayor of the Town. He refused again, but the Prefect would not accept his refusal; all the notables came to beg, the people supplicated him in the open streets, and the pressure was so great, that he eventually assented. It was noticed that what appeared specially to determine him was the almost angry remark of an old woman, who cried to him from her door: "A good Mayor is useful; a man should not recoil before the good he may be able to do." This was the third phase of his ascent; Father Madeleine had become Monsieur Madeleine, and Monsieur Madeleine became Monsieur le Maire.

Father Madeleine remained as simple as he had been on the first day: he had grey hair, a serious eye, the bronzed face of a working man, and the thoughtful face of a philosopher. He habitually wore a broad-brimmed hat, and a long coat of coarse cloth, buttoned up to the chin. He performed his duties as Mayor, but beyond that lived solitary; he spoke to few persons, liked to escape from compliments, smiled to save himself from laughing, and gave to save himself from smiling. The women said of him, "What a fine bear!" and his great pleasure was to walk about the fields. He always took his meals with an open book before him, and he had a well-selected library. He was fond of books, for they are cool and sure friends. In proportion as leisure came with fortune, he seemed to employ it in cultivating his mind: it was noticed that with each year he spent in M. his language became more polite, chosen, and gentle.

He was fond of taking a gun with him on his walks, but rarely fired; when he did so by accident, he had an infallible aim, which was almost terrific. He never killed an inoffensive animal or a small bird. Though he was no longer young, he was said to possess prodigious strength: he lent a hand to any one who needed it, raised a fallen horse, put his shoulder to a wheel stuck in the mud, or stopped a runaway bull by the horns. His pockets were always full of half-pence when he went out, and empty when he came home; whenever he passed through a village, the ragged children ran merrily after him, and surrounded him like a swarm of gnats. It was

supposed that he must have formerly lived a rustic life, for he had all sorts of useful secrets which he taught the peasants. He showed them how to destroy blight in wheat by sprinkling the granary and pouring into the cracks of the boards a solution of common salt, and to get rid of weevils by hanging up everywhere, on the walls and roofs, flowering orviot. He had recipes to extirpate from arable land, tares, and other parasitic plants which injure wheat, and would defend a rabbit hutch from rats by the mere smell of a little Guinea pig which he placed in it.

He did a number of good actions, while as careful to hide them as if they were bad. He would quietly at night enter houses, and furtively ascend the stairs. A poor fellow, on returning to his garret, would find that his door had been opened, at times forced, during his absence; the man would cry that a robber had been there, but when he entered, the first thing he saw was a gold coin left on the table. The robber who had been there was Father Madeleine.

He was affable and sad. Some persons asserted that he was a mysterious character, and declared that no one ever entered his bed-room, which was a real anchorite's cell, furnished with winged hour-glasses, and embellished with cross bones and death's heads. This was so often repeated that some elegant and spiteful ladies of M. came to him one day, and said, "Monsieur le Maire, *do* show us your bed-room, for people say that it is a grotto." He smiled and led them straightway to the "grotto;" they were terribly punished for their curiosity, as it was a bed-room merely containing mahogany furniture as ugly as all furniture of that sort, and hung with a paper at sixpence the piece. They could not notice anything but two double-branched candlesticks of an antiquated pattern, standing on the mantel-piece, and seeming to be silver, "because they were Hall-marked,"—a remark full of the wit of small towns. People did not the less continue to repeat, however, that no one ever entered this bed-room, and that it was a hermitage, a hole, a tomb. They also whispered that he had immense sums lodged with Lafitte, and with this peculiarity that things were always at his immediate disposal, "so that," they added, "M. Madeleine could go any morning to Lafitte's, sign a receipt, and carry off his two or three millions of francs in ten minutes." In reality, these

" two or three millions " were reduced, as we have said, to six hundred and thirty or forty thousand francs.

At the beginning of 1821, the papers announced the decease of M. Myriel, Bishop of D——, " surnamed Monseigneur Welcome," who had died in the odour of sanctity at the age of eighty-two. The Bishop of D——, to add here a detail omitted by the papers, had been blind for several years, and was satisfied to be blind as his sister was by his side.

The announcement of his death was copied by the local paper of M——, and on the next day Monsieur Madeleine appeared dressed in black, with crape on his hat. The mourning was noticed in the town, and it was concluded that he was somehow connected with the Bishop. This added inches to M. Madeleine's stature, and suddenly gave him a certain consideration in the noble world of M. The microscopic Faubourg St. Germain of the town thought about raising the quarantine of M. Madeleine, the probable relation of a bishop, and M. Madeleine remarked the promotion he had obtained in the increased love of the old ladies, and the greater amount of smiles from the young. One evening a lady belonging to this little great world, curious by right of seniority, ventured to say, " M. le Maire is doubtless a cousin of the late Bishop of D—— ? "

He answered, " No, Madame."

" But," the Dowager went on, " you wear mourning for him."

" In my youth I was a footman in his family," was the answer.

Another thing noticed was, that when a young Savoyard passed through the town, looking for chimneys to sweep, the Mayor sent for him, asked his name, and gave him money. The Savoyard boys told each other of this, and a great many passed through M.

By degrees and with time all the opposition died out. The respect felt for him was complete, unanimous, and cordial.

Only one man in the town and bailiwick resisted this contagion, and whatever M. Madeleine might do, remained rebellious to it, as if a sort of incorruptible and imperturbable instinct kept him on his guard. It often happened when M. Madeleine passed along a street, calmly, kindly, and greeted by the blessings of all, that a tall man, dressed in an iron-grey

great coat, armed with a thick cane, and wearing a hat with turned-down brim, turned suddenly and looked after him till he disappeared; folding his arms, shaking his head, and raising his upper lip with the lower as high as his nose, a sort of significant grimace, which may be translated,—"Who is that man? I am certain that I have seen him somewhere. At any rate, I am not his dupe."

This person's name was Javert; he belonged to the police, and performed at M—— the laborious but useful duties of an inspector. He had not seen Madeleine's beginning, for he was indebted for the post he occupied to the Secretary of Count Anglé, at that time Prefect of Police at Paris. When Javert arrived at M——, the great manufacturer's fortune was made, and Father Madeleine had become Monsieur Madeleine. Some police officers have a peculiar face, which is complicated by an air of baseness, blended with an air of authority. Javert had this face, less the baseness.

He was born in prison; his mother was a fortune-teller, whose husband was at the galleys. When he grew up he thought that he was beyond the pale of society, and despaired of ever entering it. He noticed that society inexorably keeps at bay two classes of men,—those who attack it, and those who guard it; he had only a choice between these two classes, and at the same time felt within him a rigidness, regularity, and probity, combined with an inexpressible hatred of the race of Bohemians to which he belonged. He entered the police, got on, and at the age of forty was an inspector. In his youth he was engaged in the Southern Bagnes.

This man was made up of two very simple and relatively excellent feelings,—respect for authority and hatred of rebellion; and in his eyes, robbery, murder, and every crime, were only forms of rebellion. He enveloped in a species of blind faith everybody in the service of the State, from the Prime Minister down to the game-keeper. He covered with contempt, aversion, and disgust, every one who had once crossed the legal threshold of evil.

His entire person expressed the man who spies and hides himself. His forehead could not be seen, for it was hidden by his hat; his eyes could not be seen, because they were lost under his eye-brows; his chin was plunged into his cravat, his hands were covered by his cuffs, and his cane was carried

under his coat. But when the opportunity arrived, there could be seen suddenly emerging from all this shadow, as from an ambush, an angular, narrow forehead, a fatal glance, a menacing chin, enormous hands, and a monstrous rattan. Our readers will readily understand that Javert was the terror of all that class whom the yearly statistics of the minister of justice designate under the rubric—vagabonds. The name of Javert, if uttered, set them to flight; the face of Javert, if seen, petrified them.

Javert was like an eye ever fixed on M. Madeleine, an eye full of suspicion and conjectures. M. Madeleine noticed it in the end; but he considered it a matter of insignificance. He did not even ask Javert his motive, he neither sought nor shunned him, and endured his annoying glance without appearing to notice it. He treated Javert like every one else, easily and kindly. Javert was evidently somewhat disconcerted by M. Madeleine's complete naturalness and calmness. One day, however, his strange manner seemed to produce an impression on M. Madeleine. The occasion was as follows.

When M. Madeleine was passing one morning through an unpaved lane in the town, he heard a noise and saw a group at some distance, to which he walked up. An old man, known as Father Fauchelevent, had fallen under his cart, and his horse was lying on the ground. This Fauchelevent was one of the few enemies M. Madeleine still had at this time. When Madeleine came to these parts, Fauchelevent, a tolerably well-educated peasant, was doing badly in business; and he saw the simple workman grow rich, while he, a master, was being ruined. This filled him with jealousy, and he had done all in his power, on every possible occasion, to injure Madeleine. Then bankruptcy came, and in his old days, having only a horse and cart left, and no family, he turned carter to earn a living.

The horse had both legs broken, and could not get up, while the old man was entangled between the wheels. The fall had been so unfortunate, that the whole weight of the cart was pressing on his chest, and it was heavily loaded. Fauchelevent uttered lamentable groans, and attempts had been made, though in vain, to draw him out; and any irregular effort, any clumsy help or shock, might kill him. It was impossible to extricate him except by raising the cart from

below, and Javert, who came up at the moment of the accident, had sent to fetch a jack. When M. Madeleine came up, the mob made way respectfully.

"Help!" old Fauchelevent cried, "is there no good soul who will save an old man?"

M. Madeleine turned to the spectators.

"Have you a jack?"

"They have gone to fetch one," a peasant answered.

"How soon will it be here?"

"Well, the nearest is at Hatchet the blacksmith's, but it cannot be brought here under a good quarter of an hour."

"A quarter of an hour!" Madeleine exclaimed.

It had rained on the previous night, the ground was soft, the cart sunk deeper into it every moment, and more and more pressed the old man's chest. It was evident that his ribs would be broken within five minutes.

"It is impossible to wait a quarter of an hour," said M. Madeleine to the peasants who were looking on. "Listen to me; there is still room enough for a man to slip under the cart and raise it with his back. It will only take half a minute, and the poor man can be drawn out. Is there any one here who has strong loins? there are ten louis to be earned."

His hearers looked down, and one of them muttered, "A man would have to be deucedly strong, and, besides, he would run a risk of being smashed."

"Come," Madeleine began again, "twenty louis."

The same silence.

"It is not the good-will they are deficient in," said Javert, who had just come up. "It is the strength. A man would have to be tremendously strong to lift a cart like that with his back."

Then, looking fixedly at M. Madeleine, he continued, laying a marked stress on every word he uttered,—

"Monsieur Madeleine, I never knew but *one* man capable of doing what you ask."

Madeleine started, but Javert continued carelessly, though without taking his eyes off Madeleine,—

"He was a galley-slave at the Toulon Bagne."

Madeleine turned pale; all this while the cart was slowly settling down, and Father Fauchelevent was screaming,—

" I am choking : it is breaking my ribs : a jack ! something —oh ! "

Madeleine looked around him.

" Is there no one here willing to earn twenty louis and save this poor old man's life ? "

No one stirred, and Javert repeated,—

" I never knew but one man capable of acting as a jack, and it was that convict."

" Oh, it is crushing me ! " the old man yelled.

Madeleine raised his head, met Javert's falcon eye still fixed on him, gazed at the peasants, and sighed sorrowfully. Then, without saying a word, he fell on his knees, and, ere the crowd had time to utter a cry, was under the cart. There was a frightful moment of expectation and silence. Madeleine, almost lying flat under the tremendous weight, twice tried in vain to bring his elbows up to his knees. The peasants shouted, " Father Madeleine, come out ! " And old Fauchelevent himself said, " Monsieur Madeleine, go away ! I must die, so leave me ; you will be killed too."

Madeleine made no answer ; the spectators gasped, the wheels had sunk deeper, and it was now almost impossible for him to get out from under the cart. All at once the enormous mass shook, the cart slowly rose, and the wheels half emerged from the rut. A stifled voice could be heard saying, " Make haste, help ! " It was Madeleine, who had made a last effort. They rushed forward, for the devotion of one man had restored strength and courage to all. The cart was lifted by twenty arms, and old Fauchelevent was saved. Madeleine rose : he was livid, although dripping with perspiration : his clothes were torn and covered with mud. The old man kissed his knees, and called him his saviour, while Madeleine had on his face a strange expression of celestial suffering, and turned his placid eye on Javert, who was still looking at him.

Fauchelevent had put out his knee-cap in his fall, and Father Madeleine had him carried to an infirmary he had established for his workmen in his factory, and which was managed by two sisters of charity. The next morning the old man found a thousand franc note by his bed-side, with a line in M. Madeleine's handwriting, " Payment for your cart and horse, which I have bought." The cart was smashed and the horse dead. Fauchelevent recovered, but his leg remained

stiff, and hence M. Madeleine, by the recommendation of the sisters and his curé, procured him a situation as gardener at a convent in the St. Antoine quarter of Paris.

Some time after, M. Madeleine was appointed Mayor; the first time Javert saw him wearing the scarf which gave him all authority in the town, he felt that sort of excitement a dog would feel that scented a wolf in its master's clothes. From this moment he avoided him as much as he could, and when duty imperiously compelled him, and he could not do otherwise than appear before the Mayor, he addressed him with profound respect.

CHAPTER IV

When Fantine returned to M., no one remembered her, but luckily the door of M. Madeleine's factory was like a friendly face; she presented herself at it, and was admitted to the female shop. As the trade was quite new to Fantine, she was awkward at it and earned but small wages; but that was enough, for she was earning her livelihood. When Fantine saw that she could live by it, she had a moment of joy. A taste for work really came back to her: she bought a looking-glass, delighted in seeing in it her youth, her fine hair and fine teeth; forgot many things, only thought of Cosette, and her possible future, and was almost happy. She hired a small room and furnished it, on credit, to be paid out of her future earnings,—this was a relic of her irregular habits.

Not being able to say that she was married, she was very careful not to drop a word about her child. At the outset she punctually paid the Thénardiers, and as she could only sign her name, she was compelled to write to them through the agency of a public writer. It was noticed that she wrote frequently. It was beginning to be whispered in the shop that Fantine "wrote letters," and was "carrying on."

Fantine was observed. It was a fact that she wrote, at least twice a month, and always to the same address, and paid the postage. They managed to obtain the address; "Monsieur Thénardier, Publican, Montfermeil." The public writer, who could not fill his stomach with wine without emptying his pocket of secrets, was made to talk at the wine-shop; and,

in short, it was known that Fantine had a child. A gossip undertook a journey to Montfermeil, spoke to the Thénardiers, and on her return said, " I do not begrudge my five-and-thirty francs, for I have seen the child."

The gossip who did this was a Gorgon of the name of Madame Victurnien, guardian of everybody's virtue. She was fifty-six years of age, and covered the mask of ugliness with the mask of old age. Astounding to say, this old woman had once been young; in her youth, in '93, she had married a monk, who escaped from the cloisters in a red cap, and passed over from the Bernardines to the Jacobins. She was dry, crabbed, sharp, thorny, and almost venomous, while remembering the monk whose widow she was, and who had considerably tamed her. At the Restoration she had turned bigot, and so energetically, that the priests forgave her her monk. She had a small estate which she left with considerable pallour to a religious community, and she was very welcome at the Episcopal Palace of Arras. This Madame Victurnien, then, went to Montfermeil, and when she returned, said, " I have seen the child."

All this took time, and Fantine had been more than a year at the factory, when one morning the forewoman handed her 50 francs in the Mayor's name, and told her that she was no longer engaged, and had better leave the town, so the Mayor said. It was in this very month that the Thénardiers, after asking for 12 francs instead of 7, raised a claim for 15 instead of 12. Fantine was startled; she could not leave the town, for she owed her rent and for her furniture, and 50 francs would not pay those debts. She stammered a few words of entreaty, but the forewoman intimated to her that she must leave the shop at once; moreover, Fantine was but an indifferent workwoman. Crushed by shame more than disgrace, she left the factory, and returned to her room: her fault then was now known to all! She did not feel the strength in her to say a word; she was advised to see the Mayor, but did not dare to do so. The Mayor gave her 50 francs because he was kind, and discharged her because he was just; and she bowed her head to the sentence.

M. Madeleine, however, knew nothing of all this. He made it a rule hardly ever to enter the female work-room; he had placed at its head an old maid, whom the curé had

given him, and he had entire confidence in her. M. Madeleine trusted to her in everything, for the best men are often forced to delegate their authority, and it was with the conviction she was acting rightly that the forewoman tried, condemned, and executed Fantine. As for the 50 francs, she had given them out of a sum M. Madeleine had given her for alms and helping the workwomen, and which she did not account for.

Fantine tried to get a servant's place in the town, and went from house to house, but no one would have anything to do with her. She could not leave the town, for the broker to whom she was in debt for her furniture said to her, "If you go away, I will have you arrested as a thief." The landlord to whom she owed her rent, said to her, "You are young and pretty, you can pay." She divided the 50 francs between the landlord and the broker, gave back to the latter three-fourths of the goods, only retaining what was absolutely necessary, and found herself without work, without a trade, with only a bed, and still owing about 100 francs. She set to work making coarse shirts for the troops, and earned at this sixpence a day, her daughter costing her fourpence. It was at this moment she began to fall in arrears with the Thénardiers. An old woman, however, who lit her candle for her when she came in at nights, taught her the way to live in wretchedness. Behind living on little, there is living on nothing: these are two chambers,—the first is obscure, the second quite dark.

In this distress, it would have been a strange happiness to have had her daughter with her, and she thought of sending for her. But, what! make her share her denudation? and then she owed money to the Thénardiers! how was she to pay it and the travelling expenses?

At the beginning Fantine had been so ashamed that she did not dare go out. When she was in the streets, she perceived that people turned round to look at her and pointed to her. Oh! how glad she would have been to be back in Paris. She must grow accustomed to disrespect, as she had done to poverty. Gradually she made up her mind, and after two or three months shook off her shame, and went as if nothing had occurred. "It is no matter to me," she said. She came and went, with head erect and with a bitter smile, and

felt that she was growing impudent. Madame Victurnien sometimes saw her pass from her window; she noticed the distress of "the creature whom she had made know her place," and congratulated herself.

Fantine had been discharged toward the end of winter; the next summer passed away, and winter returned. Winter changes into stone the water of heaven and the heart of man. Her creditors pressed her, for Fantine was earning too little, and her debts had increased. The Thénardiers, being irregularly paid, constantly wrote her letters, whose contents afflicted her, and postage ruined her. One day they wrote her that little Cosette was quite naked, that she wanted a flannel shirt, and that the mother must send at least ten francs for the purpose. She crumpled the letter in her hands all day, and at nightfall went to a barber's at the corner of the street, and removed her comb. Her splendid light hair fell down to her hips.

"What fine hair!" the barber exclaimed.

"What will you give me for it?" she asked.

"Ten francs."

"Cut it off."

She bought a skirt and sent it to the Thénardiers; it made them furious, for they wanted the money. They gave it to Eponine, and the poor lark continued to shiver. Fantine thought, "My child is no longer cold, for I have dressed her in my hair." She wore small round caps which hid her shorn head, and she still looked pretty in them.

A dark change took place in Fantine's heart. When she found that she could no longer dress her hair, she began to hate all around her. She had long shared the universal veneration for Father Madeleine: but, through the constant iteration that he had discharged her and was the cause of her misfortune, she grew to hate him too, and worse than the rest. When she passed the factory she pretended to laugh and sing. An old workwoman who once saw her doing so, said, 'That's a girl who will come to a bad end." She took a lover, the first who offered, a man she did not love, through bravado and with rage in her heart. He was a scoundrel, a sort of mendicant musician, an idle scamp, who beat her, and left her, as she had chosen him, in disgust. She adored her child. The lower she sank, the darker the gloom became around her.

the more did this sweet little angel gleam in her soul. She said, " When I am rich, I shall have my Cosette with me ;" and she laughed. She did not get rid of her cough, and she felt a cold perspiration in her back.

One day she received from the Thénardiers a letter to the following effect :—" Cosette is ill with miliary fever, as they call it, which is very prevalent. She must have expensive drugs, and that ruins us, and we cannot pay for them any longer. If you do not send us forty francs within a week, the little one will be dead." She burst into a loud laugh, and went out into the street, still laughing and singing. Some one who met her said, " What has made you so merry ? " and she answered, " It is a piece of stupidity some country folk have written ; they want forty francs of me—the asses ! "

As she passed across the market-place she saw a crowd surrounding a vehicle of a strange shape, on the box of which a man dressed in red was haranguing. He was a dentist going his rounds, who offered the public complete sets of teeth, opiates, powders, and elixirs. Fantine joined the crowd, and began laughing like the rest at this harangue. The extractor of teeth saw the pretty girl laughing, and suddenly exclaimed,—

" You have fine teeth, my laughing beauty. If you like to sell me your two top front teeth, I will give you a Napoleon a piece for them."

" What a horrible idea ! " Fantine exclaimed.

" Two Napoleons ! " an old toothless woman by her side grumbled, " there's a lucky girl."

Fantine ran away and stopped her ears, not to hear the hoarse voice of the man, who shouted,—" Think it over, my dear : two Napoleons may be useful. If your heart says Yes, come to-night to the *Tillac d'Argent*, where you will find me."

Fantine, when she reached home, was furious, and told her good neighbour Marguerite what had happened. " Can you understand it ? is he not an abominable man ? Pull out my two front teeth ! why, I should look horrible ; I would sooner throw myself head first out of a fifth-floor window on to the pavement."

" And what did he offer you ? " Marguerite asked.

" Two Napoleons."

" That makes forty francs."

She became thoughtful and sat down to her work. At the end of a quarter of an hour, she left the room and read Thénardier's letter again on the staircase. When she returned, she said to Marguerite:

"Do you know what a miliary fever is? Does it require much medicine?"

"Oh, an awful lot."

"Does it attack children?"

"More than anybody."

"Do they die of it?"

"Plenty," said Marguerite.

Fantine went out and read the letter once again on the staircase. At night she went out, and could be seen proceeding in the direction of the Rue de Paris. The next morning when Marguerite entered Fantine's room before day-break, for they worked together, and made one candle do for them both, she found her sitting on her bed, pale and chill. Her cap had fallen on her knees, and the candle had been burning all night, and was nearly consumed.

Horrified by this extravagance, she looked at Fantine, who turned her close-shaven head towards her, and seemed to have grown ten years older since the previous day.

"Gracious Heaven!" said Marguerite, "what is the matter with you, Fantine?"

"Nothing," the girl answered, "I am all right. My child will not die of that frightful disease for want of assistance, and I am satisfied."

As she said this, she pointed to two Napoleons that glistened on the table.

At the same time she smiled, the candle lit up her face, and it was a fearful smile. A reddish saliva stained the corner of her lips, and she had a black hole in her mouth. She sent the forty francs to Montfermeil. It had only been a trick of the Thénardiers to get money, for Cosette was not ill.

Fantine threw her looking-glass out of the window; she had long before left her cell on the second floor, for a garret under the roof. She had no bed left; she had only a rag she called a blanket, a mattress on the ground, and a bottomless chair; a little rose-tree she had had withered away, forgotten in a corner. In another corner she had a pail to hold water, which froze in winter, and in which the different levels of the

water remained marked for a long time by rings of ice. She had lost her shame, and now lost her coquetry; the last sign was, that she went out with dirty caps. Either through want of time or carelessness, she no longer mended her linen, and as the heels of her stockings wore out, she tucked them into her shoes. She mended her worn-out gown with rags of calico, which tore away at the slightest movement. The people to whom she owed money made "scenes," and allowed her no rest; she met them in the street, she met them again on her stairs. Her eyes were very bright, and she felt a settled pain at the top of her left shoulder-blade, while she coughed frequently. She deeply hated Father Madeleine, and sewed for seventeen hours a day; but a speculator hired all the female prisoners, and reduced the prices of the free workmen to nine sous a day. Her creditors were more pitiless than ever, and the broker, who had got back nearly all her furniture, incessantly said to her, "When are you going to pay me, you cheat?" She felt herself tracked, and something of the wild beast was aroused in her. About the same time Thénardier wrote to her, that he had decidedly waited too patiently, and that unless he received one hundred francs at once, he would turn poor Cosette, who had scarce recovered, out of doors, into the cold, and she must do what she could or rot. One hundred francs!" Fantine thought, "but where is the trade in which I can earn one hundred sous a day? Well! I will sell all that is left!"

And the unfortunate girl went on the streets.

Eight or ten months after the events described in the previous pages, toward the beginning of January, 1823, and on a night when snow had fallen, a dandy who wore a Morillo, and was warmly wrapped up in one of the large Spanish cloaks which at that time completed the fashionable costume in cold weather, was amusing himself by annoying a creature who was prowling about in a low-necked ball dress, and with flowers in her hair, before the window of the officers' café. This dandy was smoking, as that was a decided mark of fashion. Each time this woman passed him, he made some remark to her, which he fancied witty and amusing, as: "How ugly you are!—You have no teeth, etc., etc." This gentleman's name was Monsieur Bamatabois. The woman, a sad-dressed phantom walking backwards and forwards in the snow, made him

no answer, did not even look at him, but still continued silently and with a gloomy regularity her walk, which every few minutes brought her under his sarcasms. The slight effect produced doubtless annoyed the idler, for taking advantage of her back being turned, he crept up behind her, stooped to pick up a handful of snow, and suddenly plunged it between her bare shoulders. The girl uttered a yell, turned, leapt like a panther on the man, and dug her nails into his face with the most frightful language that could fall from a guard-room into the gutter. These insults, vomited by a voice rendered hoarse by brandy, hideously issued from a mouth in which the two front teeth were really missing. It was Fantine.

At the noise, the officers left the café in a throng, the passers-by stopped, and a laughing, yelling, applauding circle was made round these two beings, in whom it was difficult to recognize a man and a woman,—the man struggling, his hat on the ground, the woman striking with feet and fists, bare-headed, yelling, without teeth or hair, livid with passion, and horrible. All at once a tall man quickly broke through the crowd, seized the woman's satin dress, which was covered with mud, and said, "Follow me." The woman raised her hand, and her passionate voice suddenly died out. Her eyes were glassy, she grew pale instead of being livid, and trembled with fear—she had recognized Javert. The dandy profited by this incident to make his escape.

Javert broke through the circle and began walking with long strides toward the police office, which is at the other end of the market-place, dragging the wretched girl after him. She allowed him to do so mechanically, and neither he nor she said a word. On reaching the police office, which was a low room, heated by a stove, and guarded by a sentry, and having a barred glass door opening on the street, Javert walked in with Fantine, and shut the door after him, to the great disappointment of the curious, who stood on tip-toe, and stretched out their necks in front of the dirty window, trying to see.

On entering, Fantine crouched down motionless in a corner like a frightened dog. The sergeant on duty brought in a candle. Javert sat down at a table, took a sheet of stamped paper from his pocket, and began writing. Women of this class are by the French laws left entirely at the discretion of

the police. A prostitute had assaulted a citizen, and he, Javert, had witnessed it. He wrote on silently. When he had finished, he affixed his signature, folded up the paper, and said to the sergeant as he handed it to him: "Take these men, and lead this girl to prison." Then he turned to Fantine, "You will have six months for it."

The wretched girl started.

"Six months, six months' imprisonment!" she cried; "six months! and only earn seven sous a day! Why, what will become of Cosette, my child, my child! Why, I owe more than 100 francs to Thénardier M. Inspector, do you know that?"

She dragged herself across the floor, dirtied by the muddy boots of all these men, without rising, with clasped hands, and taking long strides with her knees.

"Monsieur Javert," she said, "I ask for mercy. I assure you that I was not in the wrong; if you had seen the beginning, you would say so. That gentleman, who was a stranger to me, put snow down my back. It sent me wild, for you must know that I am not very well, and besides he had been abusing me. I did nothing, and said to myself, 'This gentleman is amusing himself.' I was civil to him, and said nothing, and it was at this moment he put the snow down my back. My good M. Javert, is there no one who saw it to tell you that this is the truth? It was wrong to destroy the gentleman's hat, but why has he gone away? I would ask his pardon. Oh! I would willingly do so. Let me off this time. M. Javert, perhaps you do not know that in prison you can only earn seven sous a day, and just fancy! I have one hundred francs to pay, or my child will be turned into the street. Oh! I cannot have her with me, for my mode of life is so bad! Oh my Cosette, oh my little angel, what ever will become of you, poor darling! Take pity on me, M. Javert."

"Well," said Javert, "I have listened to you. Have you said all? Be off now, you have six months."

Javert turned his back and the soldiers seized her arm. Some minutes previously a man had entered unnoticed, he had closed the door, leant against it, and heard Fantine's desperate entreaties. At the moment when the soldiers laid hold of the unhappy girl, who would not rise, he emerged from the gloom, and said,—

"Wait a minute, if you please."

Javert raised his eyes, and recognized M. Madeleine; he took off his hat, and bowed with a sort of vexed awkwardness.

"I beg your pardon, M. le Maire—"

The words "M. le Maire" produced a strange effect on Fantine; she sprang up like a spectre emerging from the ground, thrust back the soldiers, walked straight up to M. Madeleine before she could be prevented, and, looking at him wildly, she exclaimed,—

"So you are the Mayor?"

Then she burst into a laugh, and spat in his face. M. Madeleine wiped his face, and said,—

"Inspector Javert, set this woman at liberty."

Javert felt for a moment as if he were going mad. To see a girl of the town spit in the Mayor's face was so monstrous a thing that he would have regarded it as sacrilege even to believe it possible. But when he saw this Mayor calmly wipe his face, and say, "Set this woman at liberty," he had a bedazzlement of stupor, so to speak; thought and language failed him equally. He remained dumb. His sentence had produced an equally strange effect on Fantine; she raised her bare arm, and clung to the chimney-key of the stove like a tottering person. She looked around, and began saying in a low voice, as if speaking to herself,—

"At liberty! I am to be let go! I shall not be sent to prison for six months! Who said that? It cannot be that monster of a Mayor. Was it you, my kind M. Javert? Well, I will tell you all about it, and you will let me go. That old villain of a Mayor is the cause of it all. Just imagine, M. Javert, he discharged me on account of a parcel of sluts gossiping in the shop. After that I did not earn enough, and all this misfortune came. In the first place, there is an improvement which the police gentry ought to make, and that is to prevent persons in prison injuring poor people. I will explain this to you; you earn twelve sous for making a shirt, but it falls to seven, and then you can no longer live, and are obliged to do what you can. As I had my little Cosette, I was forced to become a bad woman. My present offence is that I trampled on the gentleman's hat before the officers' café, but he had ruined my dress with snow; and our sort have only one silk dress for night. Indeed, M. Javert, I never

did any harm purposely, and I see everywhere much worse women than myself who are much more fortunate. Oh, Monsieur Javert, you said that I was to be set at liberty, did you not? Make inquiries, speak to my landlord; I pay my rent now, and you will hear that I am honest. Oh, good gracious! I ask your pardon, but I have touched the key of the stove without noticing it, and made a smoke."

M. Madeleine listened to her with deep attention: while she was talking, he took out his purse, but as he found it empty on opening it, he returned it to his pocket. He now said to Fantine,—

"How much did you say that you owed?"

Fantine, who was looking at Javert, turned round to him,—

"Am I speaking to you?"

Then she said to the soldiers,—

"Tell me, men, did you see how I spat in his face? Ah, you old villain of a Mayor, you have come here to frighten me, but I am not afraid of you; I am only afraid of M. Javert, my kind Monsieur Javert."

While saying this, she turned again to the Inspector,—"I can understand that you are a just man, M. Javert; in fact, it is quite simple; a man who played at putting snow down a woman's back, made the officers laugh; they must have some amusement, and we girls are sent into the world for them to make fun of. And then you came up: you are compelled to restore order, you remove the woman who was in the wrong, but, on reflection, as you are kind-hearted, you order me to be set at liberty, for the sake of my little girl, for six months' imprisonment would prevent my supporting her. Oh, I will not come here again, M. Javert; they can do what they like to me in future, and I will not stir. Still I cried out to-night, because it hurt me; I did not at all expect that gentleman's snow; and then besides, as I told you, I am not very well,—I cough, I have a ball in my stomach which burns, and the doctor says, 'Take care of yourself.' Here, feel, give me your hand; do not be frightened."

She no longer cried, her voice was caressing; she laid Javert's large coarse hand on her white, delicate throat, and looked up at him smilingly. All at once she hurriedly repaired the disorder in her clothes, let the folds of her dress fall, which had been almost dragged up to her knee, and walked

toward the door, saying to the soldiers with a friendly nod,—

"My lads, M. Javert says I may go, so I will be off."

She laid her hand on the hasp; one step further, and she would be in the street. Up to this moment Javert had stood motionless, with his eyes fixed on the ground, appearing in the centre of this scene like a statue waiting to be put up in its proper place. The sound of the hasp aroused him: he raised his head with an expression of sovereign authority—an expression the more frightful, the lower the man in power stands.

"Sergeant," he shouted, "do you not see that the wench is bolting? Who told you to let her go?"

"I did," said Madeleine.

Fantine, at the sound of Javert's voice, trembled, and let go the hasp. At Madeleine's voice she turned, and from this moment, without uttering a word, without even daring to breathe freely, her eye wandered from Madeleine to Javert and from Javert to Madeleine, according as each spoke.

"Monsieur le Maire, that cannot be. This creature has insulted a gentleman."

"Inspector Javert," M. Madeleine replied with a conciliating and calm accent, "listen to me. You are an honest man, and I shall have no difficulty in coming to an explanation with you. The truth is as follows: I was crossing the market-place at the time you were leading this girl away, a crowd was still assembled, I inquired, and know all; the man was in the wrong, and, in common justice, ought to have been arrested instead of her."

Javert objected,—

"The wretched creature has just insulted M. le Maire."

"That concerns myself," M. Madeleine said; "my insult is, perhaps, my own, and I can do what I like with it."

"I ask your pardon, sir; the insult does not belong to you but to the Judicial Court."

"Inspector Javert," Madeleine replied, "conscience is the highest of all courts. I have heard the woman, and know what I am doing."

"And I, Monsieur le Maire, do not know what I am seeing."

"In that case, be content with obeying."

"I obey my duty; my duty orders that this woman should go to prison for six months."

M. Madeleine answered gently,—

"Listen to this carefully; she will not go for a single day."

On hearing these decided words, Javert ventured to look fixedly at the Mayor, and said to him, though still with a respectful accent—

"I bitterly regret being compelled to resist you. Monsieur le Maire, it is the first time in my life, but you will deign to let me observe that I am within the limits of my authority. This girl attacked M. Bamatabois, who is an elector and owner of that fine three-storeyed house, built of hewn stone, which forms the corner of the Esplanade. This is a matter of the street police which concerns me, and I intend to punish the woman Fantine."

M. Madeleine upon this folded his arms, and said in a stern voice, which no one in the town had ever heard before,—

"The affair to which you allude belongs to the Borough police; and by the terms of articles nine, eleven, fifteen, and sixty-six of the Criminal Code, I try it. I order that this woman is to be set at liberty."

Javert tried a final effort.

"But, Monsieur le Maire—"

"I call your attention to article eighty-one of the law of Dec. 13th, 1799, upon arbitrary detention."

"Permit me, sir—"

"Not a word!"

"Still—"

"Leave the room!" said M. Madeleine.

Javert bowed down to the ground to the Mayor, and went out. Fantine stood up against the door, and watched him pass by her in stupor. She had seen two men, struggling in her presence, who held in their hands her liberty, her life, her soul, her child. One spoke like a demon, the other like her good angel. The angel had vanquished the demon, and the thing which made her shudder from head to foot was that this angel, this liberator, was the very man whom she abhorred, the Mayor whom she had so long regarded as the cause of all her woes; and at the very moment when she had insulted him in such a hideous way, he saved her. She listened wildly, she looked on with terror, and at every word that M. Madeleine said, she felt the darkness of hatred fade away in her heart, and something glowing and ineffable spring up in its place, which was composed of joy, confidence, and love. When

Javert had left the room, M. Madeleine turned to her, and said in a low voice, like a serious man who is making an effort to restrain his tears,—

"I have heard your story. I knew nothing about what you have said, but I believe, I feel, that it is true. I was even ignorant that you had left the factory, but why did you not apply to me? This is what I will do for you; I will pay your debts and send for your child, or you can go to it. You can live here, in Paris, or wherever you please, and I will provide for your child and yourself. I will give you all the money you require, and you will become respectable again in becoming happy, and I will say more than that: if all be as you say, and I do not doubt it, you have never ceased to be virtuous and holy in the sight of GOD! Poor woman!"

This was more than poor Fantine could endure. To have her Cosette! to leave this infamous life! to live free, rich, happy, and respectable with Cosette! to see all these realities of Paradise suddenly burst into flower, in the midst of her wretchedness! She looked as if stunned at the person who was speaking, and could only sob two or three times, "Oh, oh, oh!" Her legs gave way, she fell on her knees before M. Madeleine, and before he could prevent it, he felt her seize his hand and press her lips to it. Then she fainted.

M. Madeleine had Fantine conveyed to the infirmary he had established in his own house, and intrusted her to the sisters, who put her to bed. A violent fever had broken out; she spent a part of the night in raving and talking aloud, but at length fell asleep. On the morrow, at about mid-day, Fantine woke, and hearing a breathing close to her bed, she drew the curtain aside, and noticed M. Madeleine gazing at something above her head. His glance was full of pity and agony, and supplicated: she followed its direction, and saw that it was fixed on a crucifix nailed to the wall. M. Madeleine was now transfigured in Fantine's eyes, and seemed to her surrounded by light. He was absorbed in a species of prayer, and she looked at him for some time without daring to interrupt him, but at length said, timidly,—

"What are you doing there?"

M. Madeleine had been standing at this spot for an hour, waiting till Fantine should wake. He took her hand, felt her pulse, and answered, "How are you?"

"Very comfortable, I have slept, and fancy I am better. It will be nothing."

He continued, answering the question she had asked him first, and as if he had only just heard it,—

"I was praying to the Martyr up there;" and he mentally added, "for the Martyr down here."

M. Madeleine had spent the night and morning in making inquiries, and had learnt everything; he knew all the poignant details of Fantine's history. He continued,—

"You have suffered deeply, poor mother. Oh! do not complain, for you have at present the dowry of the elect: it is in this way that human things become angels. The hell you have now lett is the ante-room to heaven, and you were obliged to begin with that."

He breathed a deep sigh, but she smiled upon him with the sublime smile in which two teeth were wanting. Javert had written a letter during the past night, and posted it himself the next morning. It was for Paris, and the address was —"Monsieur Chabouillet, Secretary to the Prefect of Police." As a rumour had spread about the affair in the police-office, the lady-manager of the post, and some other persons who saw the letter before it was sent off, and recognized Javert's handwriting, supposed that he was sending in his resignation. M. Madeleine hastened to write to the Thénardiers. Fantine owed them over 120 francs, and he sent them 300, bidding them pay themselves out of the amount, and bring the child at once to M——, where a sick mother was awaiting it. This dazzled Thénardier. "Hang it all," he said to his wife, "we must not let the brat go, for the lark will become a milch cow for us. I see it all; some fellow has fallen in love with the mother." He replied by sending a bill for 500 and odd francs. Two undeniable amounts figured in this bill, one from a physician, the other from an apothecary, who had attended Eponine and Azelma in a long illness. At the bottom of the bill Thénardier gave credit for 300 francs received on account. M. Madeleine at once sent 300 francs more, and wrote, "Make haste and bring Cosette."

"Christi!" said Thénardier, "we must not let the child go."

In the meanwhile Fantine did not recover, and still remained in the infirmary. The sisters had at first received and nursed "this girl" with some repugnance. But in a few

days Fantine disarmed them ; she had all sorts of humble and gentle words, and the mother within her was touching.

M. Madeleine went to see her twice a day, and every time she asked him, " Shall I see my Cosette soon ? "

He would answer,—" To-morrow, perhaps ; she can arrive at any moment, for I am expecting her."

And the mother's pale face would grow radiant.

" Oh ! " she said, " how happy I shall be ! "

We have said that she did not improve ; on the contrary, her condition seemed to grow worse week by week. The handful of snow placed between her naked shoulder-blades produced a sudden check of perspiration, which caused the illness that had smouldered in her for years suddenly to break out. Larmier's fine method for studying and healing diseases of the lungs was just beginning to be employed ; the physician placed the stethoscope to Fantine's chest, and shook his head. M. Madeleine said to him, " Well ? "

" Has she not a child that she wishes to see ? " asked the doctor.

" Yes."

" Well, make haste to send for her."

Madeleine gave a start, and Fantine asked him,—

" What did the doctor say to you ? "

M. Madeleine forced a smile.

" He said that your child must come at once, for that would cure you."

" Oh," she replied, " he is right ; but what do those Thénardiers mean by keeping my Cosette ? Oh, she will come, and then I shall see happiness close to me."

Thénardier, however, would not let the child go, and alleged a hundred poor excuses. Cosette was ailing, and it would be dangerous for her to travel in winter, and then there were some small debts still to pay, which he was collecting, etc.

" I will send some one to fetch Cosette," said Father Madeleine ; " if necessary I will go myself."

He wrote to Fantine's dictation the following letter, which she signed.

" M. Thénardier,

" You will hand over Cosette to the bearer, who will pay up all little matters.

" Yours, Fantine."

About this time, a great incident happened. However cleverly we may have carved the mysterious block of which our life is made, the black vein of destiny ever reappears in it.

One morning M. Madeleine was in his study engaged in settling some pressing mayoralty matters, in case he decided on the journey to Montfermeil, when he was told that Inspector Javert wished to speak with him. On hearing this name pronounced, M. Madeleine could not refrain from a disagreeable impression.

"Show him in," he said.

On entering, Javert bowed to M. Madeleine with a look in which there was neither rancour, anger, nor suspicion. There was nothing but a gloomy sadness on this face, which was impenetrable and simple as granite. His whole person displayed humiliation and firmness, and a sort of courageous despondency. At length the Mayor laid down his pen, and half turned round.

"Well, what is the matter, Javert?"

Javert remained silent for a moment, as if reflecting, and then raised his voice with a sad solemnity, which, however, did not exclude simplicity.

"A culpable deed has been committed, sir. An inferior agent of authority has failed in his respect to a magistrate in the gravest matter. I have come, as is my duty, to bring the fact to your knowledge."

"Who is this agent?" M. Madeleine asked.

"Myself."

"And who is the magistrate who has cause to complain of the agent?"

"You, Monsieur le Maire. I have come to request that you will procure my dismissal from the service."

M. Madeleine in his stupefaction opened his mouth, but Javert interrupted him,—

"You will say that I could have sent in my resignation, but that is not enough. Such a course is honourable, but I have done wrong and deserve punishment. I must be discharged."

And after a pause he added,—

"Monsieur le Maire, you were severe to me the other day unjustly, be so to-day justly."

"What is the meaning of all this nonsense?" M Made-

leine exclaimed. "What have you done to me? You accuse yourself, you wish to be removed—"

"Discharged," said Javert.

"Very good, discharged. I do not understand it."

Javert heaved a deep sigh, and continued still coldly and sadly,—

"Six weeks ago, M. le Maire, after the scene about that girl, I was furious, and denounced you to the Prefect of Police at Paris."

M. Madeleine, who did not laugh much oftener than Javert, burst into a laugh.

"As a Mayor who had encroached on the police?"

"As an ex-galley slave."

The Mayor turned livid, but Javert, who had not raised his eyes, continued,—

"I thought you were so. A resemblance, information you sought at Faverolles, the strength of your loins, the adventure with old Fauchelevent, your skill in firing, your leg, which halts a little—and so on. It was very absurd, but I took you for a man of the name of Jean Valjean, a convict I saw twenty years ago when I was assistant-keeper at the Toulon bagne. On leaving the galley, this Valjean, as it appears, robbed a bishop, and then committed a highway robbery on a little Savoyard. For eight years he has been out of the way and could not be found, and I imagined—in a word, I did as I said.

M. Madeleine, who had taken up the charge book again, said with a careless accent,—

"And what was the answer you received?"

"That I was mad!—and they were right."

"It is fortunate that you allow it."

"I must do so, for the real Jean Valjean has been found."

The book M. Madeleine was holding fell from his grasp, he raised his head, looked searchingly at Javert, and said with an indescribable accent,—

"Oh!"

"The facts are as follows, M. le Maire. It seems that there was over at Ailly le Haut Cloche, an old fellow who was called Father Champmathieu. He was very wretched, and no attention was paid to him. This autumn Father Champmathieu was arrested for stealing cider apples. As the lock-up was under repair, the magistrates ordered that Champ-

mathieu should be taken to the departmental prison at Arras. In this prison there is an ex-convict of the name of Brevet, who has been made room-turnkey for his good behaviour. Champmathieu no sooner arrived than Brevet cries out, 'Why, I know this man: he is an ex-convict. Look at me, old fellow: you are Jean Valjean. You were at the Toulon bagne twenty years ago, and I was there too.' Champmathieu denied identity. But besides Brevet, there are two other convicts who remember him. These two were brought from the bagne and confronted with the pretended Champmathieu, and they did not hesitate for a moment. It was at this very time that I sent my denunciation to Paris, and the answer I received was that I had lost my senses, for Jean Valjean was in the hands of justice at Arras. You can conceive that this surprised me, as I fancied that I held my Jean Valjean here. I wrote to the magistrates, who sent for me, and Champmathieu was brought in."

"Well?" M. Madeleine interrupted him.

Javert answered with his incorruptible and sad face,—

"Monsieur le Maire, truth is truth: I am sorry, but that man is Jean Valjean: I recognized him too. And now that I have seen the real Jean Valjean, I cannot understand how I could have believed anything else. I ask your pardon, M. le Maire."

M. Madeleine merely answered his entreaty with the hurried question,—

"And what does this man say?"

"Well, Monsieur le Maire, it is an ugly business, for if he is Jean Valjean, he is an escaped convict. It is no longer a matter for the police courts, but for the assizes; it is no longer imprisonment for a few days, but the galleys for life. But Jean Valjean is artful, and in that I recognize him too. Any other man would struggle, cry out, refuse to be Jean Valjean, and so on. He pretends not to understand, and says, 'I am Champmathieu, and I shall stick to it.' He has a look of amazement, and plays the brute-beast, which is better. Oh! he is a clever scoundrel! But no matter, the proofs are ready to hand; he has been recognized by four persons, and the old scoundrel will be found guilty. He is to be tried at Arras assizes, and I have been summoned as a witness."

M. Madeleine had turned round to his desk again, and was

busily reading and writing in turn. He now said to the Inspector,—

"Enough, Javert; after all, these details interest me but very slightly; we are losing our time, and have a deal of work before us. Did you not state you were going to Arras on this matter in a week or ten days?"

"Sooner than that, sir?"

"On what day, then."

"I fancied I told you that the trial comes off to-morrow, and that I should start by to-night's coach."

"And how long will the trial last?"

"A day at the most, and sentence will be passed to-morrow night at the latest. But I shall not wait for that, but return so soon as I have given my evidence."

"Very good," said M. Madeleine, and he dismissed Javert with a wave of his hand. But he did not go.

"What's the matter now?" M. Madeleine asked.

"I have one thing to remind you of, sir. I must be discharged."

M. Madeleine rose.

"Javert, you are a man of honour, and I esteem you; you exaggerate your fault. I insist on your keeping your situation."

Javert looked at M. Madeleine with his bright eyes, in which it seemed as if his unenlightened but rigid conscience could be seen, and he said quietly,—

"M. le Maire, I cannot allow it."

"I repeat," M. Madeleine replied, "that the affair concerns myself."

But Javert, only attending to his own thoughts, continued,—

"M. le Maire, I am bound to treat myself as I would treat another man; when I repressed malefactors, when I was severe with scamps, I often said to myself, 'If you ever catch yourself tripping, look out.' I have tripped, I have committed a fault, and all the worse for me. I have strong arms, and will turn labourer. M. le Maire, the good of the service requires an example. I simply demand the discharge of Inspector Javert."

"We will see," said M. Madeleine, and he offered him his hand, but Javert fell back, and said sternly,—

"Pardon me, sir, but that must not be; a mayor ought not to give his hand to a spy."

He added between his teeth,—

"Yes, a spy; from the moment when I misused my authority, I have been only a spy."

Then he bowed deeply and walked to the door. When he reached it he turned round and said, with eyes still bent on the ground,—

"M. le Maire, I will continue on duty till my place is filled up."

He went out. M. Madeleine thoughtfully listened to his firm, sure step as he walked along the paved passage.

CHAPTER V

In the afternoon that followed Javert's visit, M. Madeleine went to see Fantine as usual.

The patient daily awaited the appearance of M. Madeleine, as if he brought her warmth and light; she said to the sisters, "I only live when M. le Maire is here." This day she was very feverish, and so soon as she saw M. Madeleine she asked him,—

"Where is Cosette?"

He replied with a smile, "She will be here soon."

M. Madeleine behaved to Fantine as usual, except that he remained with her an hour instead of half an hour, to her great delight. He pressed everybody not to allow the patient to want for anything, and it was noticed at one moment that his face became very dark, but this was explained when it was learnt that the physician had bent down to his ear and said, "She is rapidly sinking." Then he returned to the Mayoralty, and the office clerk saw him attentively examining a road-map of France which hung in his room, and write a few figures in pencil on a piece of paper.

From the Mayoralty M. Madeleine proceeded to the end of the town to a Fleming called Master Scaufflaer, gallicized into Scaufflaire, who let out horses and gigs by the day. M. Madeleine found Master Scaufflaire at home, and engaged in mending a set of harness.

"Master Scaufflaire," he asked him, "have you a good horse?"

"M. le Maire," the Fleming replied, "all my horses are good. What do you mean by a good horse?"

"I mean a horse that can cover twenty leagues of ground

in a day, and be in a condition to start again the next morning if necessary."

"M. le Maire," the Fleming continued, "I can suit you. My little white horse, you may have seen it pass sometimes, is full of fire. They tried at first to make a saddle-horse of it, but it reared and threw everybody that got on its back. I bought it and put it in a gig. But you must not try to get on its back, for it has no notion of being a saddle-horse. Do you know how to drive?"

"Yes."

"Well, you must travel alone and without luggage, in order not to overweight the horse."

"Agreed."

"I shall expect thirty francs a day, and the days of rest paid for as well. Not a farthing less, and you will pay for the horse's keep."

M. Madeleine took three Napoleons from his purse and laid them on the table.

"There are two days in advance."

"As I think a cabriolet would be too heavy for such a journey, and tire the horse, you must oblige me by travelling in a little tilbury I have."

The Mayor merely raised his head and said, briefly—

"The tilbury and the horse will be before my door at half-past four to-morrow morning."

"Very good, sir," Scaufflaire answered.

The reader has, of course, guessed that M. Madeleine is Jean Valjean.

We have but little to add to what the reader already knows as having happened to Jean Valjean since his adventure with little Gervais. From this moment, as we have seen, he became another man, and he made himself what the Bishop wished to make him. It was more than a transformation, it was a transfiguration. He succeeded in disappearing, sold the Bishop's plate, only keeping the candlesticks as a souvenir, passed through France, reached M——, had the idea we have described, accomplished what we have narrated, managed to make himself unseizable and inaccessible, and henceforth settled at M——, happy at feeling his conscience saddened by the past, and the first half of his existence contradicted by the last half. Despite of all his caution and pru-

dence, he had kept the Bishop's candlesticks, worn mourning for him, questioned all the little Savoyards who passed through the town, inquired after the family at Faverolles, and saved the life of old Fauchelevent, in spite of the alarming insinuations of Javert. It seemed that he thought, after the example of all those who have been wise, holy, and just, that his first duty was not toward himself.

Still, we are bound to say, nothing like the present had before occurred. At the moment when the name which he had buried so deeply was so strangely pronounced, he was struck with stupor, and, as it were, intoxicated by the sinister peculiarity of his destiny. He felt the shadows full of thunder and lightning collecting over his head: while listening to Javert he had a thought of running off, denouncing himself, taking Champmathieu out of prison, and taking his place. This was painful, like an incision in the flesh, but it passed away, and he said to himself, We will see! he repressed this first generous movement, and recoiled before his heroism.

For the remainder of the day he was in the same state—a hurricane within, a deep tranquillity outside. All was still confused and jumbled in his brain; the trouble in it was so great that he did not see distinctly the outline of any idea, and he could have said nothing about himself, save that he had received a heavy blow. He went as usual to Fantine's bed of pain, and prolonged his visit, with a kindly instinct, saying to himself that he must act thus, and recommend her to the sisters in the event of his being obliged to go away. He felt vaguely that he must perhaps go to Arras; and, though not the least in the world decided about the journey, he said to himself that, safe from suspicion as he was, there would be no harm in being witness of what might take place, and he hired Scaufflaire's tilbury, in order to be ready for any event.

He dined with considerable appetite, and, on returning to his bed-room, reflected on the position in which he now found himself. He began by noticing that, however critical and extraordinary his situation might be, he was utterly the master of it. "What am I afraid of?" he said to himself; "there was only one open door through which my past could burst in upon my life: and that door is now walled up for ever. That Javert, who has so long annoyed me, is satisfied, he will leave me at peace, for he has got his Jean

Valjean! It is possible that he may wish to leave the town too. And all this has taken place without my interference, and so, what is there so unlucky in it? Providence has done it all, and apparently decrees it. I will let matters take their course, and leave the decision to Heaven."

On the other hand, if he gave himself up, freed this man who was suffering from so grievous an error, resumed his name, became through duty the convict Jean Valjean, that would be really completing his resurrection, and eternally closing the inferno from which he was emerging! Falling back into it apparently would be leaving it in reality! He must do this: he would have done nothing unless he did this; all his life would be useless; all his reputation thrown away. He felt that the Bishop was here, that he was the more present because he was dead, that the Bishop was steadfastly looking at him, and that henceforth Madeleine the Mayor would be an abomination to him, and Jean Valjean, the convict, admirable and pure in his sight. Men saw his mask, but the Bishop saw his face; men saw his life, but the Bishop saw his conscience. He must consequently go to Arras, deliver the false Jean Valjean, and denounce the true one. Alas! this was the greatest of sacrifices, the most poignant of victories, the last step to take; but he must take it. Frightful destiny his! he could not obtain sanctity in the sight of Heaven unless he returned to infamy in the sight of man.

"Well," he said, "I will make up my mind to this. I will do my duty and save this man."

He uttered those words aloud without noticing he had raised his voice. He fetched his books, verified and put them in order. He threw into the fire a number of claims he had upon embarrassed tradesmen, and wrote a letter, which he addressed "To M. Lafitte, banker, Rue d'Artois, Paris." He then took from his desk a pocket-book, which contained a few bank-notes and the passport he had employed just previously to go to the elections. Any one who had seen him while he was accomplishing these various acts, with which such grave meditation was mingled, would not have suspected what was taking place in him. At moments his lips moved, at others he raised his head and looked at a part of the wall, as if there were something there which he desired to clear up or question.

As he felt cold, he lit a fire, but did not dream of closing the window, although by this time midnight had struck. Then he fell back into his stupor, and was obliged to make a mighty effort to remember what he had been thinking of. At last he succeeded.

"Ah yes," he said to himself, "I had formed the resolution to denounce myself."

And then he suddenly began thinking of Fantine.

"Stay," he said, "and that poor woman!"

Here a fresh crisis broke out: Fantine, suddenly appearing in the midst of his reverie, was like a ray of unexpected light. He fancied that all changed around him, and exclaimed,—

"Wait a minute! Hitherto I have thought of myself, and consulted my own convenience. Whether it suits me to be silent or denounce myself—be a contemptible and respected magistrate, or an infamous and venerable convict—it is always self, nought but self. Suppose I were to think a little about others! If I denounce myself, that Champmathieu will be set at liberty. I shall be sent back to the galleys, and what then? What will occur here? Here are a town, factories, a trade, work-people, men, women, old grandfathers, children, and poor people: I have created all this. Wherever there is a chimney smoking, I placed the brand in the fire and the meat in the saucepan: I have produced easy circumstances, circulation and credit. I revived, animated, fertilized, stimulated, and enriched the whole district. When I am gone the soul will be gone; if I withdraw all will die; and then, this woman, who has suffered so greatly, and whose misfortune I unwittingly caused—and the child which I intended to go and fetch, and restore to the mother—Do not I also owe something to this woman, in reparation of the wrong which I have done her? If I disappear, what will happen? The mother dies, and the child will become what it can. This will happen if I denounce myself. If I do not denounce myself? Come, let me see." He hesitated and trembled slightly. "Well, this man will go to the galleys, it is true, but, hang it all, he has stolen. I remain here and continue my operations: in ten years I shall have gained ten millions. I spread them over the country. The prosperity of all is increased; trades are revived, factories and forges are multiplied, and thousands of families are happy; wretchedness disappears, and with it

debauchery, prostitution, robbery, murder, all the vices, all the crimes—and this poor mother brings up her child. Why, I was mad when I talked about denouncing myself, and I must guard against precipitation. What! because it pleases me to play the grand and the generous—because I only thought of myself, and in order to save from a perhaps exaggerated though substantially just punishment a stranger, a thief, and an apparent scoundrel—a whole department must perish! a woman die in the hospital, and a poor child starve in the streets, like dogs! Why, it is abominable! These are fine scruples that save a culprit and sacrifice the innocent. That poor little Cosette, who has only me in the world, and is doubtless at this moment shivering with cold in the den of those Thénardiers. There is another pair of wretches. Let us put things at the worst: suppose that I am committing a bad action in this, and that my conscience reproaches me with it some day;—there will be devotion and virtue in accepting, for the good of my neighbour, these reproaches, which only weigh on me, and this bad action, which only compromises my own soul. Yes," he continued, with apparent self-satisfaction, "I am on the right track and hold the solution of the problem. I will let matters take their course. It is for the interest of all, not of myself. I remain Madeleine, and woe to the man who is Jean Valjean. I do not know that man, and if any one happen to be Jean Valjean at this moment, he must look out for himself, for it does not concern me. It is a fatal name that floats in the night, and if it stop and settle on a head, all the worse for that head."

He walked a little way, and then stopped short. "Come," he said, "I must not hesitate before any of the consequences of the resolution I have formed. There are threads which still attach me to Jean Valjean which must be broken. There are in this very room objects which would accuse me,—dumb things which would serve as witnesses, and they must all disappear."

He took his purse from his pocket, and drew a small key out of it. He put this key into a lock, the hole of which could scarcely be seen, for it was hidden in the darkest part of the design on the paper that covered the walls. A sort of false cupboard made between the corner of the wall and the mantelpiece was visible. In this hiding-place there were only a few rags—a blue blouse, worn trowsers, an old knapsack, and a large thorn-

stick, shod with iron at both ends. Any one who saw Jean Valjean pass through D—— in October, 1815, would easily have recognized all these wretched articles. He had preserved them, as he had done the candlesticks, that they might constantly remind him of his starting-point. He took a furtive glance at the door, as if afraid that it might open in spite of the bolt; and then with a rapid movement he made but one armful of the things he had so religiously and perilously kept for so many years, and threw them all—rags, stick, and knapsack—into the fire. He closed the cupboard, and, redoubling his precautions, which were now useless, since it was empty, dragged a heavy piece of furniture in front of it. In a few seconds, the room and opposite wall were lit up with a large red and flickering glow; all was burning, and the thorn-stick crackled and threw out sparks into the middle of the room. From the knapsack, as it burned with all the rags it contained, fell something that glistened in the ashes. On stooping it could be easily recognized as a coin; it was doubtless the little Savoyard's two-franc piece. He did not look at the fire, and continued his walk backwards and forwards. All at once his eye fell on the two candlesticks, which the fire-light caused to shine vaguely on the mantel-piece.

"Stay," he thought, "all Jean Valjean is in them, and they must be destroyed too."

He seized the candlesticks—there was a fire large enough to destroy their shape, and convert them into unrecognizable ingots. He leant over the hearth and warmed his hands for a moment; it was a great comfort to him.

He stirred up the ashes with one of the candlesticks, and in a moment they were both in the fire. All at once he fancied he heard a voice cry within him, "Jean Valjean! Jean Valjean!" His hair stood erect, and he became like a man who is listening to a terrible thing.

"Yes, that is right; finish!" the voice said; "complete what you are about; destroy those candlesticks, annihilate that reminiscence! forget the Bishop! forget everything! ruin that Champmathieu; that is right. Applaud yourself; come, all is settled and resolved on. This old man, who does not know what they want with him, who is perhaps innocent, whose whole misfortune your name causes, on whom your name weighs like a crime, is going to be taken for you, sentenced,

and will end his days in abjectness and horror. That is excellent! Be an honest man yourself; remain Mayor, honourable and honoured, enrich the town, assist the indigent, bring us orphans, live happy, virtuous, and applauded; and during the time, while you are here in joy and light, there will be somebody who wears your red jacket, bears your name in ignominy, and drags along your chain at the galleys. Yes, that is excellently arranged. Oh! you scoundrel!"

The perspiration beaded on his forehead, and he fixed his haggard eye upon the candlesticks. The voice within him, however, had not ended yet.

"Jean Valjean! there will be around you many voices making a great noise, speaking very loud and blessing you, and one which no one will hear, and which will curse you in the darkness. Well, listen, infamous man! all these blessings will fall back on the ground before reaching Heaven, and the curse alone will ascend to God!"

This voice, at first very faint, and which spoke from the obscurest nook of his conscience, had gradually become sonorous and formidable, and he now heard it in his ear. He fancied that it was not his own voice, and he seemed to hear the last words so distinctly that he looked round the room with a species of terror.

"Is there any one here?" he asked, in a loud voice and wildly.

Then he continued with a laugh which seemed almost idiotic—

"What a fool I am! there can be nobody."

There was somebody; but He was not of those whom the human eye can see. He placed the candlesticks on the mantelpiece, and then resumed that melancholy, mournful walk, which aroused the sleeper underneath him. This walking relieved him, and at the same time intoxicated him.

Alas! all his irresolution had seized him again, and he was no further advanced than at the beginning. Thus the wretched soul writhed in agony!

Three a.m. had struck, and he had been walking about in this way for five hours without a break, when he fell into his chair, and fell asleep.

His slumber was disturbed by a poignant and mournful dream connected with his present situation, in the midst of which he woke up, chilled to the marrow, for a wind, cold as the

morning breeze, was shaking the open window. The fire had died away, the candle was nearly burned out, and it was still black night. He rose and went to the window; there were still no stars in the sky. From his window he could see the yard, and his street, and a dry sharp sound on the ground below him induced him to look out. He saw two red stars whose rays lengthened and shortened curiously in the gloom. As his mind was half submerged in the mist of dreams, he thought, "There are no stars in the sky: they are on the earth now." A second sound like the first completely woke him, and he perceived that those two stars were carriage lamps, and by the light which they projected he could distinguish the shape of the vehicle—it was a tilbury, in which a small white horse was harnessed. The sound he had heard was the pawing of the horse's hoof on the ground.

"What's the meaning of this conveyance?" he said to himself; "who can have come at so early an hour?"

At this moment there was a gentle tap at his bed-room door; he shuddered from head to foot, and shouted in a terrible voice, "Who's there?"

Some one replied, "I sir," and he recognized his old servant's voice.

"The tilbury has come, sir."

"What tilbury?"

"Did you not order one? The ostler says that he has come to fetch M. le Maire."

"What ostler?"

"M. Scaufflaire's."

This name made him start as if a flash of lightning had passed before his eyes.

"Ah, yes," he repeated, "M. Scaufflaire."

Could the old woman have seen him at this moment, she would have been horrified. There was a lengthened silence, during which he stupidly examined the candle flame, and rolled up some of the wax in his fingers. The old woman, who was waiting, at length mustered up courage to raise her voice again.

"M. le Maire, what answer am I to give?"

"Say it is quite right, and that I shall be down directly."

On this morning, the mail-cart, just as it entered M——, and while turning a corner, ran into a tilbury drawn by a white

horse, coming in the opposite direction, and in which there was only one sitter, a man wrapped in a cloak. The wheel of the tilbury received a rather heavy blow, and though the driver of the mail-cart shouted to the man to stop, he did not listen, but went on at a smart trot.

"That man is in a deuce of a hurry," said the courier.

It was broad daylight when M. Madeleine reached Hesdin, and he stopped at the inn to let the horse breathe and give it a feed. The capital little beast had done five leagues in two hours, and had not turned a hair.

He did not get out of the tilbury; the ostler who brought the oats suddenly stooped down and examined the left wheel.

"Have you come far in this state?" the man said.

"Five leagues."

"Ah!"

"Why do you say, ah?"

The ostler bent down again, remained silent for a moment, with his eye fixed on the wheel, and then said as he drew himself up—

"Because this wheel, which may have gone five leagues, cannot possibly go another mile."

The wheel was, in fact, seriously damaged. The blow dealt it by the mail-cart had broken two spokes, and almost carried away the axle-tree.

"My good fellow," he said to the ostler, "is there a wheelwright here?"

"Of course, sir. He lives close by. Hilloh, Master Bourgaillard."

Master Bourgaillard was standing in his doorway: he examined the wheel, and made a face like a surgeon regarding a broken leg.

"Can you mend this wheel?

"Yes, sir."

"When can I start again?"

"To-morrow: there is a good day's work. Are you in a hurry, sir?"

"In a great hurry: I must set out again in an hour at the latest."

"It is impossible; you will not be able to go on till to-morrow."

"Have you a gig I can hire?"

The wheelwright had noticed at a glance that the tilbury was a hired vehicle; he shrugged his shoulders.

"You take such good care of gigs you hire, that if I had one I would not let it to you."

"Well, one to sell me?"

"I have not one."

"Is there not the Arras mail-cart? When does that pass?"

"Not till to-night."

"Is there any one who lets out vehicles in the town?"

"No."

"Is there another wheelwright?"

The ostler and the wheelwright replied simultaneously,—

"No."

He felt an immense joy, for it was evident that Providence was interfering. It was she who had broken the tilbury wheel and stopped his journey. He had not yielded to this species of first summons; he had made every possible effort to continue his journey; he had loyally and scrupulously exhausted all resources; he had not recoiled before the season, fatigue, or expense; and he had nothing to reproach himself with. If he did not go further, it did not concern him; it was not his fault, it was not the doing of his conscience, but of Providence. He breathed freely and fully for the first time since Javert's visit.

While he was questioning the wheelwright, some passers-by stopped around, and a lad to whom no one paid any attention, after listening for some moments, ran off. At the instant when the traveller made up his mind to turn back, this boy returned, accompanied by an old woman.

"Sir," the woman said, "my boy tells me that you wish to hire a conveyance?"

This simple remark, made by an old woman led by a child, made the perspiration pour down his back. He fancied he saw the hand which had let him loose reappear in the shadow behind him, ready to clutch him again. He replied,—

"Yes, my good woman, I want to hire a gig. But there is not one in the town."

"Yes, there is," said the old woman; "at my house."

He gave a start, for the fatal hand had seized him again. The poor woman really had a sort of wicker-cart under a shed,

The wheelwright and the ostler, sorry to see the traveller escape them, interfered;—

"It was a frightful rattle-trap, and had no springs,—it is true that the inside seats were hung with leathern straps—the rain got into it—the wheels were rusty, and ready to fall to pieces—it would not go much further than the tilbury—the gentleman had better not get into it,"—and so on.

All this was true, but the rattle-trap, whatever it might be, rolled on two wheels, and could go to Arras. He paid what was asked, left the tilbury to be repaired against his return, had the horse put into the cart, got in, and went his way.

He had lost much time at Hesdin, and would have liked to recover it. The little horse was courageous, and worked for two; but it was February, it had been raining, and the roads were bad. The cart too ran much more heavily than the tilbury, and there were numerous ascents. He took nearly four hours in going from Hesdin to St. Pol: four hours for five leagues!

Twilight was setting in at the moment when the school-boys, leaving school, saw this traveller enter Tinques. He did not halt there, but as he left the village, a road-mender, who was laying stones, raised his head, and said to him,—

"Your horse is very tired. Are you going to Arras?"

"Yes."

"If you go at that pace, you will not reach it very soon."

He stopped his horse, and asked the road-mender,—

"How far is it from here to Arras?"

"Nearly seven long leagues."

"How so? the post-book says only five and a quarter leagues."

"Ah," the road-mender continued, "the road is under repair; you will find it cut up about a mile further on, and it is impossible to pass. You must take the road on the left, that runs to Carency, and cross the river; when you reach Camblin you will turn to the right, for it is the Mont Saint Eloy road that runs to Arras."

"But I shall lose my way in the dark."

"And it is a cross-road; stay, sir," the road-mender continued, "will you let me give you a piece of advice? Your horse is tired, so return to Tinques, where there is a good inn; sleep there, and go to Arras to-morrow."

"I must be there to-night."

"That is different. In that case go back to the inn all the same, and hire a second horse. The stable boy will act as your guide across the country."

He took the road-mender's advice, turned back, and half an hour after passed the same spot at a sharp trot with a strong second horse. A stable lad, who called himself a postilion, was sitting on the shafts of the cart. Still he felt that he had lost time, for it was now dark. They entered the cross road, and it soon became frightful; the cart fell out of one rut into another, but he said to the postilion,—

"Keep on at a trot, and I will give you a double fee."

In one of the jolts the trace-bar broke.

"The bar is broken, sir," said the postilion, "and I do not know how to fasten my horse, and the road is very bad by night. If you will go back and sleep at Tinques, we can get to Arras at an early hour to-morrow."

He answered, "Have you a piece of rope and a knife?"

"Yes, sir."

He cut a branch and made a trace-bar; it was a further loss of twenty minutes but they started again at a gallop. The plain was dark, and a low, black fog was creeping over the hills. A heavy wind, which came from the sea, made in all the corners of the horizon a noise like that of furniture being moved. All that he could see had an attitude of terror, for how many things shudder beneath the mighty breath of night! The cold pierced him, for he had eaten nothing since the previous morning. He vaguely recalled his other night-excursion, on the great plain of D——, eight years before, and it seemed to him to be yesterday. A clock struck from a distant steeple, and he asked the lad,—

"What o'clock is that?"

"Seven, sir, and we shall be at Arras by eight, for we have only three leagues to go."

At this moment he made for the first time this reflection—that all the trouble he was taking was perhaps thrown away; he did not even know the hour for the trial, and he might at least have asked about that; it was extravagant to go on thus, without knowing if it would be of any service. Then he made some mental calculations: usually the sittings of assize courts began at nine o'clock, this matter would not occupy much time, the theft of the apples would be easily proved, and then there

would be merely the identification, four or five witnesses to hear, and little for counsel to say. He would arrive when it was all over.

The postilion flogged the horses; they had crossed the river and left Mont Saint Eloy behind them; the night was growing more and more dark.

At this very moment Fantine was joyful. She had passed a very bad night, she had coughed fearfully, and her fever had become worse. In the morning, when the physician paid his visit, she was raving; he felt alarmed, and begged to be sent for so soon as M. Madeleine arrived. All the morning she was gloomy, said little, and made folds in her sheet, while murmuring in a low voice, and calculating what seemed to be distances. Her eyes hollow and fixed, they seemed almost extinct, and then, at moments, they were relit, and flashed like stars. It seems as if, on the approach of a certain dark hour, the brightness of heaven fills those whom the brightness of earth is quitting. Each time that Sister Simplice asked her how she was, she invariably answered, "Well, but I should like to see M. Madeleine."

At about half-past two Fantine began to grow agitated, and in the next twenty minutes asked the nun more than ten times, "What o'clock is it?" Three o'clock struck: at the third stroke Fantine, who usually could scarce move in her bed, sat up; she clasped her thin yellow hands in a sort of convulsive grasp, and the nun heard one of those deep sighs, which seem to remove a crushing weight, burst from her chest. Then Fantine turned and looked at the door: but no one entered, and the door was not opened. She remained thus for a quarter of an hour, with her eyes fixed on the door, motionless, and holding her breath. The nun did not dare speak to her, and as the clock struck the quarter, Fantine fell back on her pillow. The half-hour passed, then the hour, and no one came. Her thoughts could be clearly read, but she did not say a word, she merely coughed in a sad way. It seemed as if something dark was settling down on her, for she was livid and her lips were blue. She smiled every now and then.

When five o'clock struck, the nun heard her say very softly and sweetly, "As I am going away to-morrow, it was wrong of him not to come to-day." Sister Simplice herself was surprised at M. Madeleine's delay. In the meanwhile Fantine

looked up at the top of her bed, and seemed to be trying to remember something : all at once she began singing in a voice faint as a sigh. It was an old cradle-song with which she had in former times lulled her little Cosette to sleep, and which had not once recurred to her during the five years she had been parted from her child. She sang with so sad a voice and to so soft an air, that it was enough to make any one weep, even a nun. The sister, who was accustomed to austere things, felt a tear in her eye. The clock struck, and Fantine did not seem to hear it. Sister Simplice sent a servant-girl to inquire of the porteress of the factory whether M. Madeleine had returned and would be at the infirmary soon : the girl came back in a few minutes. Fantine was still motionless and apparently engaged with her own thoughts. The servant told Sister Simplice in a very low voice that the Mayor had set off before six o'clock that morning in a small tilbury ; that he had gone alone, without a driver ; that no one knew what direction he had taken, for while some said they had seen him going along the Arras road, others declared they had met him on the Paris road. He was, as usual, very gentle, and he had merely told his servant she need not expect him that night.

While the two women were whispering with their backs turned to her, Fantine had knelt up in bed, with her two clenched hands supported by the pillow, and listened with her head thrust between the curtains. All at once she cried,—

" You are talking about M. Madeleine : why do you whisper ? what is he doing, and why does he not come ? "

The servant stammered,—

" The porteress told me that he could not come to-day."

" My child," the sister said, " be calm and lie down again."

Fantine, without changing her attitude, went on in a loud voice, and with an accent at once imperious and heart-rending,—

" He cannot come : why not ? you know the reason. You were whispering it to one another, and I insist on knowing."

" The Mayor is gone on a journey."

Fantine rose and sat up on her heels, her eyes sparkled, and an ineffable joy shone on her sad face.

" He has gone to fetch Cosette," she exclaimed.

Then she raised her hands to heaven, and her lips moved : she was praying. When she had finished she said, " My sister, I am willing to lie down again and do everything you wish :

I was naughty just now. I ask your pardon for having spoken so loud, for I know that is wrong, good sister; but, look you, I am so happy. GOD is good, and M. Madeleine is good: only think, he has gone to Montfermeil to fetch my little Cosette."

She lay down again, helped the nun to smooth her pillow, and kissed a little silver cross she wore on her neck, and which Sister Simplice had given her.

"My child," the sister said, "try to go to sleep now, and do not speak any more."

"Sister, do not say to me that I must not speak, for I am extremely happy: I am going on very well, I feel no pain at all; I am going to see Cosette again, and I even feel very hungry. It is nearly five years since I saw her: you cannot imagine how a mother clings to her child,—and then she must be so pretty. She must be a great girl now, for she is going on for seven. I call her Cosette, but her real name is Euphrasie. Good Lord! how wrong it is for a mother to be so many years without seeing her child! she ought to reflect that life is not eternal. Oh! how kind it is of the Mayor to go! Is it true that it is so cold? I hope he took his cloak. He will be here again to-morrow, will he not? and we will make a holiday of it. To-morrow morning, sister, you will remind me to put on my little cap with the lace border. Montfermeil is a great distance, but the stage coaches travel so quickly! He will be here to-morrow with Cosette.

Any one who had seen her a quarter of an hour before would not have understood it; she was now quite flushed, she spoke with an eager natural voice, and her whole face was a smile. At times she laughed while speaking to herself in a low voice. A mother's joy is almost a childish joy.

"Well!" the nun said, "you are now happy. So obey me and do not speak any more."

Fantine laid her head on the pillow, and said in a low voice, "Yes, lie down, behave yourself, as you are going to have your child. Sister Simplice is right: all in this place are right."

And then without stirring, without moving her head, she began looking around with widely opened eyes and a joyous air, and said nothing more. The sister closed the curtains, hoping she would fall off to sleep. The physician arrived between seven and eight o'clock. Hearing no sound, he fancied Fantine asleep. He entered softly and walked up to the bed on

tip-toe. He opened the curtains, and by the light of the lamp saw Fantine's large calm eyes fixed on him. She said to him,—

"Oh, sir, my child will be allowed to sleep in a little cot by my bed-side?"

The physician fancied she was delirious. She added,—

"Only look; there is exactly room."

The physician took Sister Simplice on one side, who explained the matter to him: that M. Madeleine was absent for a day or two, and being in doubt they had not thought it right to undeceive the patient, who fancied that he had gone to Montfermeil, and she might possibly be in the right. The physician approved, and returned to Fantine's bed, who said to him,—

"In the morning, when the little puss wakes up, I will say good-day to her, and at night I, who do not sleep, will listen to her sleeping. Her gentle little breathing will do me good."

"Give me your hand," said the physician.

"Oh yes, you do not know that I am cured. Cosette arrives to-morrow."

The physician was surprised to find her better: the oppression was slighter, her pulse had regained strength, and a sort of recovered life was animating the poor exhausted girl.

"Doctor," she continued, "has the sister told you that M. Madeleine has gone to fetch my darling?"

The physician recommended silence, and that any painful emotion should be avoided. As he went away, he said to the sister: "She is better. If the Mayor were to arrive with the child to-morrow, I do not know what would happen: though hers is an organic malady, we might perchance save her."

It was nearly eight in the evening when the cart we left on the road drove under the archway of the post-house at Arras. M. Madeleine had taken fourteen hours in a journey for which he had allowed himself six. He did himself the justice that it was no fault of his, but in his heart he was not sorry at it. The landlady came in.

"Is not the post-office in this house?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

The landlady led him to the office, where he showed his passport, and inquired whether he could return to M—— the same night by the mail cart. Only one seat was vacant, and

he took it and paid for it. "Do not fail, sir," said the clerk, "to be here at one o'clock precisely."

This done, he left the hotel, and began walking about the streets. He was not acquainted with Arras, the streets were dark, and he walked about hap-hazard, but he seemed obstinately determined not to ask his way of passers-by. He crossed the little river Crinchon, and found himself in a labyrinth of narrow lanes, in which he lost his way. A citizen came toward him with a lantern, whom, after some hesitation, he resolved to address, though not till he had looked before and behind him, as if afraid lest anybody should overhear the question he was about to ask.

"Will you be kind enough to tell me the way to the courts of justice, sir?" he said.

"Follow me," replied the man. "I am going in the direction of the courts, that is to say of the Prefecture, for the courts are under repair at present, and the sittings take place temporarily at the Prefecture."

On the road, the citizen said to him,—

"If you wish to witness a trial you are rather late, for the court usually closes at six o'clock."

However, when they arrived in the great square the old man showed him four lofty lighted windows in a vast gloomy building.

"On my word, sir," he said, "you have arrived in time, and are in luck's way. Do you see those four windows? they belong to the assize courts; there must have been a long trial, and they are having an evening session. Are you interested in the trial?"

He answered,—

"I have not come for any trial: I only wish to speak to a solicitor."

"That is different. That is the door, sir, where the sentry is standing, and you have only to go up the large staircase."

He followed the old man's instructions, and a few minutes later was in a large hall, in which there were a good many people, and groups of robed barristers were gossiping together. This hall, which was large and only lighted by one lamp, served as a waiting room; and folding doors, at this moment closed, separated it from the grand chamber in which the assizes were

being held. The obscurity was so great that he was not afraid of addressing the first barrister he came across.

"Is there any way of entering the court, sir?" he asked.

"I do not think so, for it is very full. Still, the trial is suspended, and some persons have gone out. When the court resumes, you can try."

"Which is the way in?"

"By that large door."

The barrister left him. He walked up to several groups and listened to what they were saying; as the trial list was very heavy, the President had selected for this day two simple and short affairs. They had begun with an infanticide, and were now engaged with Champmathieu, the relapsed convict. This man had stolen apples, but it was proved that he had already been at the Toulon galleys. It was this that made his affair bad. His examination and the deposition of the witnesses were over; but there were still the speech for the defence and the summing up, and hence it would not be over till midnight. The man would probably be condemned, for the public prosecutor was sharp, and did not "miss" his person; he was a witty fellow who wrote verses. An usher was standing near the door communicating with the court, and he asked him,—

"Will this door be opened soon?"

"It will not be opened," said the usher; "the hall is full, and no one can go in."

The usher added after a pause,—"There are certainly two or three seats behind the President, but he only admits public officials to them."

After saying this, the usher turned his back on him. He withdrew with hanging head, crossed the waiting room, and slowly went down the stairs, hesitating at every step. He was probably holding counsel with himself. On reaching the landing he leant against the banisters and folded his arms; but all at once he took his pocket-book, tore a leaf from it, wrote in pencil upon it, "M. Madeleine, Mayor of M. sur M.;" then he hurried up the stairs, cleft the crowd, walked up to the usher, handed him the paper, and said to him with an air of authority,—"Hand this to the President." The usher took the paper, glanced at it, and obeyed.

Without suspecting the fact, the Mayor of M— enjoyed

a species of celebrity. The name of M. Madeleine was everywhere pronounced with veneration, and Arras and Douai envied the fortunate little town of M— its Mayor. The Councillor of the Royal Court of Douai, who presided at the present Arras assizes, like every one else, was acquainted with this deeply and universally honoured name. When the usher discreetly opened the door of the judges' robing-room, leant over the President's chair, and handed him the paper, adding, "This gentleman wishes to hear the trial," the President made a deferential movement, took up a pen, wrote a few words at the foot of the paper, and returned it to the usher, saying,—"Show him in."

The unhappy man whose history we are recording had remained near the door of the court at the same spot and in the same attitude as when the usher left him. He heard through his reverie some one say to him, "Will you do me the honour of following me, sir?" It was the same usher who had turned his back on him just before, and was now bowing to the ground. At the same time the usher handed him the paper; he unfolded it, and as he happened to be near the lamps he was able to read, "The President of the Assize Court presents his respects to M. Madeleine." He crumpled the paper in his hands, as if the words had a strange and bitter after-taste for him. He followed the usher, and a few minutes later found himself alone in a stern-looking room, lighted by two wax candles standing on a green-baize-covered table. He still had in his ears the last words of the usher, who had just left him,—"You are in the Board's withdrawing-room; you have only to turn the handle of that door, and you will find yourself in court behind the President's chair." These words were mingled in his thoughts with a confused recollection of narrow passages and dark staircases, which he had just passed through. The usher had left him alone—the supreme moment had arrived. He tried to collect himself, but could not succeed; for it is especially in the hours when men have the most need of thought that all the threads are broken in the brain.

While thinking, he turned, and his eyes met the brass handle of the door that separated him from the assize court. He had almost forgotten this door, but his eye, at first calm, rested on it, then became wild and fixed, and was gradually

filled with terror. Drops of perspiration stood out between his hair and poured down his temples.

This handle, which was round and made of polished brass, shone for him like a terrific star; he looked at it as a sheep would look at the eye of a tiger. His eyes would not leave it, and from time to time he took a step which brought him nearer to the door. Had he listened he would have heard, like a species of confused murmur, the noise in the adjoining court, but he did not listen and did not hear. All at once, and without knowing how, he found himself close to the door; he convulsively seized the handle, and the door opened. He was in the assize court.

No one in the crowd paid any attention to him, for all eyes converged on a single point—a wooden bench placed against a little door, along the wall on the left of the President; on this bench, which was illumined by several candles, sat a man between two gendarmes. This man was the man; he did not seek him, he saw him; his eyes went here naturally, as if they had known beforehand where that face was. He fancied he saw himself, aged, not absolutely alike in face, but exactly similar in attitude and appearance, with his bristling hair, with his savage restless eyeballs, and the blouse, just as he was on the day when he entered D——, full of hatred, and concealing in his mind that hideous treasure of frightful thoughts which he had spent nineteen years in collecting on the pavement of the bagne. He said to himself with a shudder, "Great God, shall I become again like that?" This being appeared to be at least sixty years of age; he had something about him rough, stupid, and startled. On hearing the sound of the door, persons made way for the new comer, the President had turned his head, and guessing that the gentleman who had just entered was the Mayor of M—, he bowed to him. The public prosecutor, who had seen M. Madeleine at M—, whither his duties had more than once called him, recognized him and also bowed. He scarce noticed it, for he was under a species of hallucination; he was looking at a judge, a clerk, gendarmes, a number of cruelly curious faces,—he had seen all this once, formerly, seven-and-twenty years ago. These mournful things he found again,—they were there, stirring, existing; it was no longer an effort of his memory, a mirage of his mind;

they were real gendarmes, real judges, a real crowd, and real men in flesh and bone. He saw all the monstrous aspects of his past reappear, and live again around him, with all the terror that reality possesses. There was a chair behind him, into which he fell, terrified by the idea that people could see him. When he was seated he took advantage of a pile of paste-board cases on the Judges' desk to hide his face from the spectators. He could now see without being seen: he fully regained the feeling of the real, and gradually recovered. He attained that phase of calmness in which a man can listen. Monsieur Bamatabois was serving on the jury. He looked for Javert, but could not see him, for the witnesses' bench was hidden by the clerk's table, and then the court was hardly lighted.

At the moment when he came in, the counsel for the defence was ending his speech. He had established the fact that the apple robbery was not materially proved—his client, whom, in his quality as defender, he persistently called Champmathieu, had not been seen by any one scaling a wall or breaking the branch; he had been arrested with the branch in his possession, but he declared that he found it on the ground and picked it up. Where then was the evidence that this Champmathieu was a robber? Only one thing, his being an ex-convict. The counsel did not deny that this fact seemed unluckily proved. Four witnesses unhesitatingly recognized Champmathieu as the galley slave, Jean Valjean. To this testimony, the counsel could only oppose his client's denial, which was certainly interested: but, even supposing that he was the convict Jean Mathieu, did that prove he was the apple-stealer? it was a presumption at the most, but not a proof. The accused, it was true,—and his counsel was obliged "in his good faith" to allow it,—had adopted a bad system of defence; he insisted on denying everything,—not merely the robbery, but his quality as convict. A confession on the latter point would have doubtless been better, and gained him the indulgence of his judges; the counsel had advised him to do so, but the prisoner had obstinately refused. This was wrong, but should not his scanty intellect be taken into consideration? This man was visibly stupid: a long misery at the galleys, a long wretchedness out of them, had brutalized him, etc. etc.; his defence was bad, but was

that a reason to find him guilty? The counsel wound up by imploring the jury and the court, if the identity of Jean Valjean appeared to them proved, to punish him as a criminal who had broken his ban, and not apply the fearful chastisement which falls on the relapsed convict.

The public prosecutor replied. He congratulated the counsel for the defence on his "fairness," and cleverly took advantage of it; he attacked the prisoner with all the concessions which his counsel had made. He appeared to allow that the prisoner was Jean Valjean, and he therefore was so. Who was this Jean Valjean? Here came a description of a monster in human form, etc. The model of this sort of description will be found in the recitation of Theramène, which daily renders great services to judicial eloquence. The audience and the jury "quivered," and when the description was ended, the public prosecutor went on. "And it is such a man, etc. etc. etc., a vagabond, having no means of existence, etc. etc. etc., accustomed through his past life to culpable actions, and but little corrected by confinement in the bagne, as is proved by the crime committed on Little Gervais, etc. etc. etc.—it is such a man, who found on the high road with the proof of robbery in his hand, and a few paces from the wall he had climbed over, denies the fact, the robbery, denies everything, even to his name and his identity. In addition to a hundred proofs to which we will not revert, four witnesses recognize him, Javert, the upright Inspector of Police, and three of his old comrades in ignominy, the convicts Brevet, Chenildieu, and Cochepaille. And what does he oppose to this crushing unanimity? he denies. What hardness of heart! But you will do justice, gentlemen of the jury, etc. etc. etc."

While the public prosecutor was apeaking the prisoner listened with open mouth, and with a sort of amazement in which there was certainly some admiration. From time to time he slowly moved his head from right to left, and from left to right, in a sort of dumb and melancholy protest, with which he had contented himself ever since the beginning of the trial. The public prosecutor drew the attention of the jury to this dull attitude, which was evidently calculated, and which denoted, not imbecility, but skill, cunning, and the habit of deceiving justice, and which brought out in full

light the "profound perverseness" of this man. He concluded by reserving the affair of Little Gervais, and by demanding a severe sentence. The counsel for the defence rose, began by complimenting the public prosecutor on his "admirable speech," and then replied as well as he could, but feebly; it was plain that the ground was giving way under him.

The moment for closing the trial had arrived.

The President, a grave and kind man, began speaking. Turning to the prisoner, he requested him to listen to what he was about to say, and added: "You are in a situation which should cause you to reflect. The heaviest presumptions are weighing upon you, and may entail capital punishment. Prisoner, I ask you for the last time to explain yourself clearly on the two following facts: In the first place, did you, yes or no, climb over the wall, break a branch, and steal apples, that is to say, commit a robbery with escalade? secondly, yes or no, are you the liberated convict, Jean Valjean?"

The prisoner shook his head with a confident air, like a man who understands and knows what answer he is going to make. He opened his mouth, turned to the President, and said,—

"In the first place—"

Then he looked at his cap, looked at the ceiling, and held his tongue.

"Prisoner," the public prosecutor said in a stern voice, "pay attention. You make no answer to the questions that are asked you, and your confusion condemns you. It is evident that your name is not Champmathieu, but Jean Valjean, at first concealed under the name of Jean Mathieu, your mother's name; that you went to Auvergne; that your birthplace is Faverolles, and that you are a wood-cutter. It is evident that you stole ripe apples by clambering over a wall, and the gentlemen of the jury will appreciate the fact."

The prisoner had sat down again, but he hurriedly rose when the public prosecutor had finished, and exclaimed,—

"You are a wicked man. This is what I wanted to say, but I could not think of it at first. I have stolen nothing, for I am a man who do not eat every day. I was coming from

Ailly, and, walking after a flood, I found a branch with apples lying on the ground, and picked it up, little thinking it would bring me into trouble. I have been in prison and bullied for three months, and after that people talk against me, I don't know why, and say to me, Answer. The gendarme, who is a good-hearted fellow, nudges me with his elbow, and says, Why don't you answer? I cannot explain myself, for I am no scholar, but only a poor man. I have not stolen, I only picked up things lying on the ground. You talk about Jean Valjean and Jean Mathieu. I do not know these persons, they are countrymen. I used to work for Monsieur Baloup, Boulevard de l'Hôpital, and my name is Champmathieu. You are a very clever fellow to tell me where I was born, for I don't know. I believe that my father and mother were persons who went about the roads, but I do not know it after all. When I was a boy I was called little, and now I am called old. I have been in Auvergne. I have been at Faverolles. Well, hang it, may not a man have been at those two places without having been to the galleys? I tell you that I have not stolen, and that my name is Champmathieu. You will vex me in the end with your nonsense. Why is everybody so spiteful against me?"

The public prosecutor, who had not sat down, here addressed the President.

"In the presence of these confused but very clear denials on the part of the prisoner, who would like to pass for an idiot, but will not succeed, we warn him,—we request that it may please you, sir, and the court to recall the prisoners Brevet, Cochepaille, and Chenildieu, and Police Inspector Javert, and examine them again as to the identity of the prisoner with Jean Valjean."

"I must remark," said the President, "that Inspector Javert, having been recalled to his duties at a neighbouring town, left the hall and the town immediately after giving his evidence; we authorized him to do so with the consent of the public prosecutor and the counsel for the defence."

"Perfectly correct, sir," the public prosecutor continued. "In the absence of Inspector Javert, I believe it my duty to remind the gentlemen of the jury of the statement he made here a few hours ago. His evidence is as follows: 'I do not require moral presumptions and material proof to contradict

the prisoner's assertions, for I recognize him perfectly. This man's name is not Champmathieu, he is Jean Valjean, an ex-convict of a very violent and formidable character. It was with great reluctance that he was liberated when he completed his time. He had nineteen years' hard labour for qualified robbery, and made five or six attempts to escape. In addition to the Little Gervais robbery and the larceny of the apples, I also suspect him of a robbery committed in the house of his Grandeur the late Bishop of D——. I frequently saw him when I was assistant-gaoler at Toulon, and I repeat that I recognize him perfectly.' "

Such a precise declaration seemed to produce a lively effect on the audience and the jury, and the public prosecutor wound up by requesting that the other three witnesses should be brought in and re-examined. The President gave an order to an usher, and a moment after the door of the witness-room opened. The usher, accompanied by a gendarme, brought in the prisoner Brevet. The ex-convict Brevet wore the black and grey jacket of the central prisons; he was a man of about sixty years of age, who had the face of a business man and the look of a rogue. He had become a sort of gaoler in the prison to which new offences had brought him, and was a man of whom the officials said, "He tries to make himself useful."

"Brevet," said the President, "as you have undergone a degrading punishment, you cannot be sworn."

Brevet looked down humbly.

"Still," the President continued, "there may remain, by the permission of Heaven, a feeling of honour and equity even in the man whom the law has degraded, and it is to that feeling I appeal in this decisive hour. The moment is a solemn one, and there is still time for you to retract, if you believe that you are mistaken. Prisoner, stand up. Brevet, look at the prisoner. Tell us on your soul and conscience whether you still persist in recognizing this man as your old mate at the galleys, Jean Valjean."

Brevet looked at the prisoner, and then turned to the court.

"Yes, sir, I was the first who recognized him, and I adhere to it. This man is Jean Valjean, who came to Toulon in 1796 and left in 1815. I came out a year later. He looks

like a brute now, but he was cunning at the hulks. I recognize him positively."

Chenildieu was next brought in, a convict for life, as was shown by his red jacket and green cap. He was serving his time at Toulon, whence he had been fetched for this trial. The President addressed him much as he had done Brevet, begged him to reflect, and asked him if he still persisted in recognizing the prisoner. Chenildieu burst into a laugh:

"I should think I do! why, we were fastened to the same chain for five years. So you are sulky, old fellow?"

"Go and sit down," said the President.

The usher brought in Cochepaille. This second convict for life, who had been fetched from the galleys and was dressed in red like Chenildieu, was a peasant of Lourdes and a semi-bear of the Pyrenees. He was one of those wretched men whom nature has sketched as wild beasts, and whom society finishes as galley-slaves. The President asked him, like the two others, whether he still persisted, without any hesitation or trouble, in recognizing the man standing before him.

"It is Jean Valjean," said Cochepaille. "He was nicknamed Jean the Jack, because he was so strong."

Each of the affirmations of these three men, evidently made in good faith, had aroused in the audience a murmur of evil omen for the prisoner. The prisoner himself listened to them with that amazed face which, according to the indictment, was his principal means of defence. The President addressed him,—

"You have heard the evidence, prisoner; have you any answer to make?"

He answered,—

"I say—famous!"

A laugh broke out in the audience and almost affected the jury. It was plain that the man was lost.

"Ushers," said the President, "produce silence in the court: I am about to sum up."

At this moment there was a movement by the President's side: and a voice could be heard exclaiming,—

"Brevet, Chenildieu, and Cochepaille, look this way." All those who heard the voice felt chilled to the heart, for it was so lamentable and terrible. All eyes were turned in the

direction whence it came : a man seated among the privileged audience behind the court had risen, pushed open the gate that separated the judges' bench from the public court, and stepped down. The President, the public prosecutor, M. Bamatabois, twenty persons, recognized him, and exclaimed simultaneously, " Monsieur Madeleine ! "

It was he in truth ; the clerk's lamp lit up his face ; he held his hat in his hand, there was no disorder in his attire, and his coat was carefully buttoned. He was very pale and trembled slightly ; and his hair, which had been grey when he arrived at Arras, was now perfectly white—it had turned so during the hour he had passed in the court. Every head was raised, the sensation was indescribable, and there was a momentary hesitation among the spectators. The voice had been so poignant, the man standing there seemed so calm, that at first they did not understand, and asked each other who it was that had spoken. They could not believe that this tranquil man could have uttered that terrific cry. This indecision lasted but a few moments. Before the President and the public prosecutor could say a word, before the gendarmes and ushers could make a move, the man, whom all still called at this moment M. Madeleine, had walked up to the witnesses, Brevet, Chenildieu, and Cochepaille.

" Do you not recognize me ? " he asked them.

All three stood amazed, and gave a nod to show that they did not know him, and Cochepaille, who was intimidated, gave a military salute. M. Madeleine turned to the jury and the court, and said in a gentle voice,—

" Gentlemen of the jury, acquit the prisoner. Monsieur le President, have me arrested. The man you are seeking is not he, for—I am Jean Valjean."

Not a breath was drawn,—the first commotion of astonishment had been succeeded by a sepulchral silence ; all felt that species of religious terror which seizes on a crowd when something grand is being accomplished. The President's face, however, displayed sympathy and sorrow ; he exchanged a rapid look with the public prosecutor, and a few words in a low voice with the assessors. He then turned to the spectators, and asked with an accent which all understood,—

" Is there a medical man present ? "

The public prosecutor then said,—

"Gentlemen of the jury, The strange and unexpected incident which has disturbed the trial inspires us, as it does yourselves, with a feeling which we need not express. You all know, all least by reputation, the worthy M. Madeleine, Mayor of M——. If there be a medical man here, we join with the President in begging him to attend to M. Madeleine and remove him to his house."

M. Madeleine did not allow the public prosecutor to conclude, but interrupted him with an accent full of gentleness and authority:

"I thank you, sir, but I am not mad, as you will soon see. You were on the point of committing a great error. I am accomplishing a duty, for I am the hapless convict, and I am telling you the truth. What I am doing at this moment GOD above is looking at, and that is sufficient for me. You can seize me, for here I am; and yet I did my best. I hid myself under a name, I became rich, I became Mayor, and I wished to get back among honest men, but it seems that this is impossible. There are many things I cannot tell you, as I am not going to describe my life to you, for one day it will be known. It is true that I robbed the Bishop; also true that I robbed Little Gervais, and they were right in telling you that Jean Valjean was a dangerous villain—though, perhaps all the fault did not lie with him. Listen, gentlemen of the court. A man so debased as myself cannot remonstrate with Providence, or give advice to society; but I will say that the infamy from which I sought to emerge is an injurious thing, and the galleys make the convict. Before I went to Toulon I was a poor peasant, with but little intelligence, but the galleys changed me. I was stupid, and I became wicked. At a later date indulgence and goodness saved me, in the same way as severity had destroyed me. But, forgive me, you cannot understand what I am saying. At my house the two-franc piece I stole seven years ago from Little Gervais will be found among the ashes in the fireplace. I have nothing more to add, so seize me. Good Heavens! the public prosecutor shakes his head. You say M. Madeleine has gone mad, and do not believe me. This is afflicting; at least do not condemn this man. What! these three do not recognize me! Oh, I wish that Javert were here, for he would recognize me!"

No pen could render the benevolent and sombre melancholy of the accent which accompanied these words. He then turned to the three convicts,—

"Well, I recognize you. Brevet, do you not remember me?" He broke off, hesitated for a moment, and said,—

"Can you call to mind the chequered braces you used to wear at the galleys?"

Brevet gave a start of surprise and looked at him from head to foot in terror. He continued,—

"Chenildieu, you have a deep burn in your right shoulder, because you placed it one day in a pan of charcoal in order to efface the three letters, T. F. P., which, however, are still visible. Answer me—is it so?"

"It is true," said Chenildieu.

"Cochepaille, you have near the hollow of your left arm a date made in blue letters with burnt gunpowder; the date is that of the Emperor's landing at Cannes, March 1, 1815. Turn up your sleeve."

Cochepaille did so, and every eye was turned to his bare arm; a gendarme brought up a lamp, and the date was there. The unhappy man turned to the audience and the judges, with a smile which to this day affects those who saw it. It was the smile of triumph, but it was also the smile of despair.

"You see plainly," he said, "that I am Jean Valjean."

In the hall there were now neither judges, accusers, nor gendarmes; there were only fixed eyes and heaving hearts. It was evident that they had Jean Valjean before them. The appearance of this man had been sufficient to throw a bright light on an affair which was so obscure a moment previously: without needing any explanation, the entire crowd understood, as if through a sort of electric revelation, at once and at a glance the simple and magnificent story of a man who denounced himself in order that another man might not be condemned in his place. It was an impression which quickly passed away, but at the moment was irresistible.

"I will not occupy the time of the court longer," Jean Valjean continued; "I shall go away, as I am not arrested, for I have several things to do. The public prosecutor knows who I am, he knows where I am going, and he will order me to be arrested when he thinks proper."

He walked towards the door, and not a voice was raised, not an arm stretched forth to prevent him. All fell back, for there was something divine in this incident, which causes the multitude to recoil and make way for a single man. He slowly walked on; it was never known who opened the door, but it is certain that he found it opened when he reached it. When there, he turned and said,—

"I am at your orders, sir,"

Then he addressed the audience.

"I presume that all of you consider me worthy of pity? Great God, when I think of what I was on the point of doing, I consider myself worthy of envy. Still I should have preferred that all this had not taken place."

He went out, and the door was closed as it had been opened, for men who do certain superior deeds are always sure of being served by some one in the crowd. Less than an hour after, the verdict of the jury acquitted Champmathieu, and Champmathieu, who was at once set at liberty went away in stupefaction, believing all the men mad, and not at all comprehending this vision.

CHAPTER VI

Day was beginning to dawn. Fantine had passed a sleepless and feverish night, though full of bright visions, and towards morning fell asleep. Sister Simplice, who was watching, took advantage of this slumber to go and prepare a fresh dose of bark. The worthy sister had been for some time in the surgery, stooping over her drugs and bottles, and looking carefully at them, on account of the mist which dawn spreads over objects. All at once she turned her head and gave a slight shriek. M. Madeleine had entered silently, and was standing before her.

"Is it you, sir?" she exclaimed.

He answered in a low voice,

"How is the poor creature?"

"Not so bad just at present, but she has frightened us terribly."

She explained to him what had occurred, how Fantine had been very ill the previous day, but was now better, because

she believed that he had gone to Montfermeil to fetch her child. The sister did not dare question him, but she could see from his looks that he had not been there.

"All that is well," he said. "You did right in not undeceiving her."

"Yes," the sister continued, "but now that she is going to see you, sir, and does not see her child, what are we to tell her?"

He remained thoughtful for a moment.

"GOD will inspire us," he said.

It was now bright day in the room, and it lit up M. Madeleine's face. The sister raised her eyes by chance.

"Good gracious, sir," she exclaimed, "what can have happened to you? Your hair is quite white."

"What!" he said.

Sister Simplice had no mirror, but she took from a drawer a small looking-glass which the infirmary doctor employed to make sure that a patient was dead. M. Madeleine took this glass, looked at his hair, and said, "So it is." He said it carelessly, and as if thinking of something else, and the sister felt chilled by some unknown terror of which she caught a glimpse in all this. He asked,—

"Can I see her?"

"Will you not procure her child for her, sir?" the sister said, hardly daring to ask the question.

"Of course; but it will take at least two or three days."

"If she were not to see you till then, sir," the sister continued timidly, "she would not know that you had returned; it would be easy to keep her quiet, and when her child arrived, she would naturally think that you had returned with it. That would not be telling a falsehood."

M. Madeleine appeared to reflect for a few moments, and then said with his calm gravity,—

"No, sister, I must see her, for I am possibly pressed for time."

"In that case you can go in, sir, though she is asleep."

He then entered Fantine's room, went up to the bed, and opened the curtains. She was asleep; her breath issued from her chest with that tragic sound peculiar to those diseases which crush poor mothers who sit up at nights by the side of their sleeping child for whom there is no hope. But this

painful breathing scarce disturbed an ineffable serenity spread over her face, which transfigured her in her sleep. Her pallor had become whiteness; her cheeks were carnations. Her long, fair eyelashes, the sole beauty that remained of her virginity and youth, quivered, though remaining closed. Her whole person trembled as if she had wings which were on the point of expanding and bearing her away. To see her thus, no one could have believed that she was in an almost hopeless state, for she resembled rather a woman who is about to fly away than one who is going to die. The branch, when the hand approaches to pluck the flowers, quivers and seems at once to retire and advance. The human body undergoes something like this quiver when the moment arrives for the mysterious fingers of death to pluck the soul.

M. Madeleine stood for some time motionless near this bed, looking first at the patient and then at the crucifix, as he had done two months previously, on the day when he came for the first time to see her in this asylum. They were both in the same attitude,—she sleeping, he praying; but in those two months her hair had turned grey, and his white. The sister had not come in with him: he was standing by the bed-side, finger on lip, as if there were some one in the room whom he was bidding to be silent. She opened her eyes, saw him, and said calmly and with a smile,—

"And Cosette?"

She gave no start of surprise, no start of joy, for she was joy itself. The simple question—"And Cosette?" was asked in such profound faith, with so much certainty, with such an utter absence of anxiety and doubt, that he could not find a word to say. She continued,—

"I knew you were there, for though I was asleep, I saw. I have seen you for a long time, and have been looking after you all night; you were in a glory, and had around you all sorts of heavenly faces."

She looked up to the crucifix.

"But," she continued, "tell me where Cosette is? why was she not laid in my bed so that I could see her directly I woke?"

He answered something mechanically which he could never remember. Luckily the physician, who had been sent for came to M. Madeleine's assistance.

" My dear girl," said the physician, " calm yourself, your child is here."

Fantine's eyes sparkled, and covered her whole face with brightness ; she clasped her hands with an expression which contained all the violence and all the gentleness a prayer can have simultaneously.

" Oh," she exclaimed, " bring her to me ! "

Touching maternal illusion ! Cosette was still to her the little child who must be carried.

" Not yet," the physician continued, " not at this moment ; the sight of your own child would agitate you and do you harm. You must get well first."

She impetuously interrupted him,—

" But I am well ! I tell you I am well. I insist on seeing my child."

" There, you see," the physician said, " how violent you are ! When you grow reasonable, I will bring her myself."

The poor mother hung her head.

" Doctor, I ask your pardon, I sincerely ask your pardon. I am not angry, for I know very well that I am going to be happy. The whole night I have seen white things and smiling faces. The doctor will bring me Cosette when he likes ; I have no fever now, because I am cured ; I feel that there is nothing the matter with me, but I will behave as if I were ill, and not stir, so as to please these ladies. When you see that I am quite calm, you will say, We must give her her child."

M. Madeleine had seated himself in a chair by the bedside ; she turned to him, visibly making an effort to appear calm and " very good," as she said in that weakness of illness which resembles childhood, in order that, on seeing her so peaceful, there might be no difficulty in bringing Cosette to her. Still, while checking herself, she could not refrain from asking M. Madeleine a thousand questions.

" Have you had a pleasant journey, sir ? Oh, how kind it was of you to go and fetch her for me ! Only tell me how she is. Did she stand the journey well ? Alas ! she will not recognize, she will have forgotten me in all this time, poor darling ! Had she got clean underclothing ? did those Thénardiers keep her clean ? Oh ! how I should like to see her !

Did you not find her very pretty, sir? You must have been very cold in the stage-coach? Can she not be brought here, if only for a moment? You could do it if you liked, as you are the Mayor."

He took her hand and said: "Cosette is lovely, she is well, you will see her soon, but calm yourself. You speak too eagerly, and put your arms out of bed, which will make you cough."

In fact, a fit of coughing interrupted Fantine at nearly every word. She did not object, she feared lest she had injured the confidence she had wished to inspire, by some too impassioned entreaties, and she began talking of indifferent matters.

M. Madeleine still held her hand, and was looking at her anxiously; it was evident that he had come to tell her something at which he now hesitated. The physician had left, and Sister Simplice alone remained near them. "I can hear her, I can hear her!" She held out her arms to command silence, held her breath, and began listening with ravishment A child was playing in the yard, and probably belonged to one of the workmen. It was one of those accidents which constantly occur, and seem to form part of the mysterious *mise-en-scène* of mournful events. The child, a little girl, was running about to warm herself, laughing and singing loudly. Alas! what is there in which children's games are not mingled?

"Oh!" Fantine continued, "'tis my Cosette! I recognize her voice. How happy we are going to be! We will have a small garden, for M. Madeleine has promised me that. My child will play in the garden. She must know her alphabet by this time, and I will teach her to spell. She will chase butterflies, and I shall look at her. Then, she will take her first communion; let me see when that will be."

All at once she ceased speaking, and this made M. Madeleine raise his head mechanically. Fantine had become frightful to look at. She no longer spoke, she no longer breathed; she was half sitting up, and her thin shoulder projected from her night-gown; her face, radiant a moment previously, was hard, and she seemed to be fixing her eyes, dilated by terror, upon something formidable that stood at the other end of the room.

"Great Heaven!" he exclaimed, "what is the matter with you, Fantine?"

She did not answer, she did not remove her eyes from the object, whatever it might be, which she fancied she saw; but she touched his arm with one hand, and with the other made him a sign to look behind him. He turned back and saw Javert.

This is what had occurred. Half-past twelve was striking when M. Madeleine left the assize court of Arras; and he returned to the hotel just in time to start by the mail cart in which he had booked his place. A little before six A.M. he reached M——, and his first care was to post the letter for M. Lafitte, and then proceed to the infirmary and see Fantine. Still, he had scarce quitted the court ere the public prosecutor, recovering from his stupor, rose on his legs, deplored the act of mania on the part of the honourable Mayor of M——, declared that his convictions were in no way modified by this strange incident, which would be cleared up at a later date, and demanded, in the interim, the conviction of this Champmathieu, evidently the true Jean Valjean. The persistency of the public prosecutor was visibly in contradiction with the feelings of all,—the public, the court, and the jury. The counsel for the defence had little difficulty in refuting his arguments, and establishing that through the revelations of M. Madeleine, that is to say, the real Jean Valjean, circumstances were entirely altered, and the jury had an innocent man before them. The President in his summing-up supported the defence, and the jury in a few moments acquitted Champmathieu. Still, the public prosecutor wanted a Jean Valjean; and, as he no longer had Champmathieu, he took Madeleine. Immediately after Champmathieu was acquitted, he had a conference with the President as to the necessity of seizing the person of the Mayor of M——, and after the first emotion had passed, the President raised but few objections. Justice must take its course. The order of arrest was consequently made out, and the prosecutor at once sent it off by express to M——, addressed to Inspector Javert, who, as we know, returned home immediately after he had given his evidence.

Javert was getting up at the moment when the messenger handed him the order of arrest and the warrant. The order of arrest was thus conceived: "Inspector Javert will appre-

hend Monsieur Madeleine, Mayor of M——, who in this day's session was recognized as the liberated convict, Jean Valjean." Any one who did not know Javert, and had seen him at the moment when he entered the infirmary ante-room, could not have guessed what was taking place, but would have considered him to be as usual. He was cold, calm, serious, his grey hair was smoothed down on his temples, and he went up the stairs with his usual slowness. But any one who was well acquainted with him, and examined him closely, would have shuddered; the buckle of his leathern stock, instead of sitting in the nape of his neck, was under his left ear. This revealed an extraordinary agitation. Javert was a complete character, without a crease in his duty or in his uniform: methodical with criminals, and rigid with his coat buttons. He had merely fetched a corporal and four men from the guardhouse close by, left them in the yard, and had Fantine's room pointed out to him by the unsuspecting porteress, who was accustomed to see policemen ask for the Mayor.

On reaching Fantine's room, Javert turned the key, pushed the door with the gentleness either of a sick-nurse or a spy, and stood in the half-opened door with his hat on his head, and his left hand thrust into the breast of his great coat, which was buttoned to the chin. Under his elbow could be seen the leaden knob of his enormous cane, which was concealed behind his back. All at once Fantine raised her eyes, saw him, and made M. Madeleine turn. At the moment when Madeleine's glance met Javert's, the latter, without stirring or drawing near, became fearful. The certainty of at length holding Jean Valjean caused all he had in his soul to appear on his countenance, and the stirred-up sediment rose to the surface. Javert's satisfaction was displayed in his sovereign attitude, and the deformity of triumph was spread over his narrow forehead.

Javert, though terrifying, was not ignoble. Probity, sincerity, candour, conviction, and the idea of duty, are things which, by deceiving themselves, may become hideous, but which, even if hideous, remain grand; they are virtues which have but one vice, error.

Fantine had not seen Javert since the day when the Mayor tore her out of his clutches, and her sickly brain could form

no other thought but that he had come to fetch her. She could not endure his frightful face; she felt herself dying. She buried her face in her hands, and cried with agony,—

"Monsieur Madeleine, save me!"

Jean Valjean—we will not call him otherwise in future—had arisen, and said to Fantine in his gentlest, calmest voice,—

"Do not be alarmed—he has not come for you."

Then he turned to Javert and said,—

"I know what you want."

And Javert answered,—

"Come, make haste."

There was something savage and frenzied in the accent that accompanied these words. While speaking thus, he did not advance—he merely darted at Jean Valjean the look which he threw out as a grapple, and with which he violently drew wretches to him. It was this look which Fantine had felt pierce to her marrow two months before. On hearing Javert's roar, Fantine opened her eyes again; but the Mayor was present, so what had she to fear? Javert walked into the middle of the room and cried,

"Well, are you coming?"

The unhappy girl looked around her. No one was present but the nun and the Mayor, to whom, then, could this humiliating remark be addressed? only to herself. She shuddered. Then she saw an extraordinary thing, so extraordinary that nothing like it had ever appeared in the darkest delirium of fever. She saw the policeman Javert seize the Mayor by the collar, and she saw the Mayor bow his head. It seemed to her as if the end of the world had arrived.

"Monsieur le Maire!" Fantine screamed.

Javert burst into a laugh, that frightful laugh which showed all his teeth.

"There is no Monsieur le Maire here."

Jean Valjean did not attempt to remove the hand that grasped his collar; he said,—

"Javert—"

Javert interrupted him. "Call me Monsieur the Inspector."

"I should like to say a word to you in private, sir," Jean Valjean continued.

"Speak up," Javert answered, "people talk aloud to me."

"It is a request I have to make of you, but it must only be heard by yourself—"

"What do I care for that? I am not listening!"

Jean Valjean turned to him and said rapidly, and in a very low voice,—

"Grant me three days! three days to go and fetch this unhappy woman's child! I will pay whatever you ask, and you can accompany me if you like."

"You must be joking," Javert cried. "Why, I did not think you such a fool! You ask three days of me that you may bolt! You say that it is to fetch this girl's brat! ah, ah, that is rich, very rich."

Fantine had a tremor.

"My child," she exclaimed, "to go and fetch my child? Then she is not here! Sister, answer me, where is Cosette? I want my child! Monsieur Madeleine, M. le Maire!"

Javert stamped his foot.

"There's the other beginning now; will you be quiet, wench? A devil's own country, where galley slaves are magistrates, and street walkers are nursed like countesses. Well, well, it will be altered now, and it's time for it."

He looked fixedly at Fantine, and added, as he took a fresh hold of Jean Valjean's cravat, shirt, and coat collar,

"I tell you there is no M. Madeleine and no Monsieur le Maire, but there is a robber, a brigand, a convict of the name of Jean Valjean, and I've got him,—that's what there is."

Fantine rose, supporting herself on her stiffened arms and hands; she looked at Jean Valjean; she looked at Javert; she looked at the nun; she opened her mouth as if to speak, but there was a rattle in her throat, her teeth chattered, she stretched out her arms, convulsively opening her hands, clutching like a drowning man, and then suddenly fell back on the pillow. Her head struck against the bed head, and fell back on her breast with gaping mouth and open eyes; she was dead. Jean Valjean laid his hand on that one of Javert's which held him, opened it as if it had been a child's hand, and then said to Javert,—

"You have killed this woman."

"Enough of this," Javert shouted furiously. "I am not here to listen to abuse, so you can save your breath. There

is a guard down below, so come quickly, or I shall handcuff you."

There was in the corner of the room an old iron bedstead in a bad condition, which the sisters used as a sofa when they were sitting up at night. Jean Valjean went to this bed, tore off in a twinkling the head piece, an easy thing for muscles like his, seized the supporting bar, and looked at Javert. Javert recoiled to the door. Jean Valjean, with the iron bar in his hand, walked slowly up to Fantine's bed; when he reached it, he turned and said to Javert in a scarcely audible voice,—

"I would advise you not to disturb me just at present."

One thing is certain,—Javert trembled. He thought of going to fetch the guard, but Jean Valjean might take advantage of the moment to escape. He, therefore, remained, clutched his stick by the small end, and leaned against the door-post, without taking his eyes off Jean Valjean. The latter rested his elbow on the bedstead, and his forehead on his hand, and began contemplating Fantine, who lay motionless before him. He remained thus, absorbed and silent, and evidently not thinking of anything else in the world. On his face and in his attitude there was only an indescribable pity. After a few minutes passed in this reverie, he stooped over Fantine and spoke to her in a low voice. What did this outcast man say to this dead woman? No one on earth heard the words, but did that dead woman hear them? There are touching illusions, which are perhaps sublime realities. One thing is indubitable, that Sister Simplice, the sole witness of what took place, has frequently declared that the moment when Jean Valjean whispered in Fantine's ear, she distinctly saw an ineffable smile playing round her pale lips and in her vague eyeballs, which were full of the amazement of the tomb. Jean Valjean took Fantine's head in his hands, and laid it on the pillow, as a mother might have done to a child. Then he tied the strings of her night-gown, and thrust her hair under her cap. When this was done, he closed her eyes. Fantine's face at this moment seemed strangely illumined, for death is the entrance into brilliant light. Fantine's hand was hanging out of bed; Jean Valjean knelt down by this hand, gently raised and kissed it. Then he rose and turned to Javert,—

"Now I am at your service."

Javert placed Jean Valjean in the town gaol. The arrest of M. Madeleine produced an extraordinary commotion in M——, but it is sad to have to say that nearly everybody abandoned him on hearing that he was a galley-slave. In less than two hours all the good he had done was forgotten, and he was only a galley-slave. It is but fair to say, though, that they did not yet know the details of the affair at Aras.

It is thus that the phantom which called itself M. Madeleine faded away at M——; only three or four persons in the whole town remained faithful to his memory, and his old servant was one of them. On the evening of the same day this worthy old woman was sitting in her lodge, still greatly startled, and indulging in sad thoughts. The factory had been closed all day, the gates were bolted, and the street was deserted. There was no one in the house but the two nuns, who were watching by Fantine's body. Towards the hour when M. Madeleine was wont to come in, the worthy porteress rose mechanically, took the key of M. Madeleine's bed-room from a drawer, and the candlestick which he used at night to go up-stairs; then she hung the key on the nail from which he usually took it, and placed the candlestick by its side, as if she expected him. Then she sat down again and began thinking. The poor old woman had done all this unconsciously. She did not break off her reverie for two or three hours, and then exclaimed, "Only think of that! I have hung his key on the nail!"

At this moment the window of the lodge was opened, a hand was passed through the opening, which seized the key and lit the candle by hers. The porteress raised her eyes, and stood with gaping mouth, but she repressed the cry which was in her throat; for she recognized this hand, this arm, this coat-sleeve as belonging to M. Madeleine. It was some minutes ere she could speak for she "was struck," as she said afterwards when describing the adventure.

"Good gracious, M. le Maire," she at length exclaimed, "I fancied—"

"That I was in prison?" he said. "I was so, but I pulled out a bar, leapt out, and here I am. I am going up to my room; go and fetch Sister Simplice, who doubtless is by the side of that poor woman."

It was never known how he managed to get into the yard without having the gate opened. He always carried about him a master-key, which opened a little side door, but he must have been searched and this key taken from him. This point was not cleared up. He went up the stairs that led to his room, and on reaching the landing, left the candle on the top stair, closed his window and shutters, and then entered the room with the candle. This precaution was useful, for it will be remembered that his window could be noticed from the street. No trace of disorder remained, for the porteress "had done his room;" but she had picked out of the ashes and laid neatly on the table the two iron ends of the stick, and the forty-sous piece, which was blackened by the fire. He took a sheet of paper, on which he wrote, "This is the two-franc piece stolen from Little Gervais, to which I alluded in court," and he laid the coin on the paper, so that it should be the first thing seen on entering the room. He took from a drawer an old shirt, which he tore up, and wrapped the two candlesticks in the rags. Still, he displayed no haste or agitation, and while wrapping up the candlesticks he ate a piece of black bread—probably the prison bread which he took with him on his escape. There were two gentle taps at the door.

It was Sister Simplice; she was pale, her eyes were red, and the candle she held shook in her hand. In the emotions of this day the nun had become a woman again; she had wept, and was trembling. Jean Valjean had just finished writing some lines on a piece of paper, which he handed to the sister, with the remark, "Sister, you will deliver this to the Curé?"

As the paper was open, she turned her eyes on it, "You may read it," he said.

She read, "I request the Curé to take charge of all that I leave here. He will be good enough to defray out of it the costs of my trial and the interment of the woman who died this morning. The rest will be for the poor."

The sister attempted to speak, but could only produce a few inarticulate sounds: at length she managed to say,—

"Do you not wish to see the poor unhappy girl for the last time, sir?"

"No," he said, "I am pursued, and if I were to be arrested in her room it would disturb her."

He had scarce said this, ere a great noise broke out on the staircase: they heard a tumult of ascending steps, and the old servant cry in her loudest and most piercing voice,—

"My good sir, I can take my oath that no one has come in here all day or all the evening, and I have not left my lodge once."

A man answered,—

"But there is a light in that room."

They recognized Javert's voice. The room was so built that the door, on being thrown open, concealed a nook in the right-hand wall: Jean Valjean blew out the light, and crept into the nook. Sister Simplice fell on her knees by the table, as the door opened and Javert entered. The nun did not raise her eyes: she was praying. On noticing her, Javert halted in great confusion. The air he breathed, was reverence for all authority. With him, of course, ecclesiastical authority was the highest of all. In his eyes, a priest was a spirit that does not deceive, a nun a creature who does not sin. On noticing the sister, his first movement was to withdraw. His second impulse was to remain, and at least venture one question. Sister Simplice had never told a falsehood in her life: Javert was aware of this, and especially revered her for it.

"Sister," he asked, "are you alone in the room?"

The sister raised her eyes and said, "Yes."

"In that case," Javert continued, "I beg your pardon for pressing you, but it is my duty,—you have not seen this evening a person, a man who has escaped and we are seeking—that fellow of the name of Jean Valjean. Have you seen him?"

The sister answered "No."

She had told two falsehoods one upon the other, without hesitation, rapidly, as if devoting herself.

"I beg your pardon," said Javert; and he withdrew with a deep bow.

Oh, holy woman, it is many years since you were on this earth; may this falsehood be placed to your credit in Paradise!

The sister's assertion was so decisive for Javert, that he did not notice the singular fact of the candle just blown out and which was still smoking on the table. An hour later a man making his way through the fog, was hurrying away from M—— in the direction of Paris. This man was Jean Valjean; and it was proved, by the testimony of two or three carriers

who met him, that he was carrying a bundle and was dressed in a blouse.

One last word about Fantine. We have all one mother, the earth, and Fantine was given back to that mother. The Curé thought he was doing his duty, keeping as much money as he possibly could out of what Jean Valjean left him for the poor. After all, who were the people interested ?—a convict and a street-walker : hence he simplified Fantine's interment, and reduced it to what is called the "public grave." Fantine was therefore interred in the gratis corner of the cemetery where the poor are lost. Fortunately God knows where to look for a soul. Her tomb resembled her bed.

CHAPTER VII

THE necessity of our story carries us to the field of Waterloo on the evening of the battle. The moon shone brightly, and this favoured Blücher's ferocious pursuit, denounced the trail of the fugitives, surrendered this disastrous crowd to the Prussian cavalry, and assisted the massacre. Such tragical complacency of the night is witnessed at times in catastrophes. After the last cannon was fired the plain of Mont St. Jean remained deserted. The English occupied the French encampment, for the usual confirmation of victory is to sleep in the beds of the conquered. They established their bivouac a little beyond Rossomme, and while the Prussians followed up the fugitives, Wellington proceeded to the village of Waterloo, to draw up his report for Lord Bathurst. Were ever the *Sic vos non vobis* applicable, it is most certainly to this village of Waterloo, which did nothing, and was half a league away from the action. Mont St. Jean was cannonaded, Hougomont burned, Papelotte burned, Plancenoit burned, La Haye Sainte carried by storm, and La Belle Alliance witnessed the embrace of the two victors ; but these names are scarce known, and Waterloo, which did nothing during the battle, has all the honour of it.

About midnight a man was prowling, or rather crawling, about the hollow road of Ohain : he was, according to all appearance, neither English nor French, nor peasant nor soldier, less a man than a ghoule, attracted by the smell of the dead, whose

victory was robbery, and who had come to plunder Waterloo. He was dressed in a blouse which looked something like a gown, was anxious and daring, and looked behind while he went onwards. Who was this man? Night knew probably more about him than did day. He had no bag, but evidently capacious pockets under his blouse. From time to time he stopped, examined the plain around him as if to see whether he was watched, bent down quickly, disturbed something lying silent and motionless on the ground, and then drew himself up again and stepped away. His attitude, and his rapid mysterious movements, made him resemble those twilight *larvæ* which haunt ruins, and which the old Norman legends call "les alleurs;" certain nocturnal fowlers display the same outline on the marshes.

Any one who had attentively examined would have seen behind the house which stands at the intersection of the Nivelles and Mont St. Jean roads, a sort of small vivandière's cart with a tilt of tarpaulin stretched over wicker-work, drawn by a hungry-looking, staggering horse, which was nibbling the nettles. In this cart, a woman was seated on chests and bundles, and there was probably some connexion between this cart and the prowler. There was not a cloud in the sky, and though the ground may be blood red, the moon remains white; that is the indifference of nature. In the fields branches of trees broken by cannon-balls, but still holding on by the bark, waved softly in the night breeze. A breath shook the brambles, and there was a quiver in the grass that resembled the departure of souls. In the distance could be confusedly heard the march of the English patrols and rounds. Hougomont and La Haye Sainte continued to burn, making one in the west, the other in the east, two large bodies of flames, to which were joined the English bivouac fires, stretching along the hills on the horizon, in an immense semicircle. The scene produced the effect of an unfastened ruby necklace with a carbuncle at either end.

The nocturnal prowler looked around and held a hideous review of the dead; he walked with his feet in the blood. All at once he stopped. A few paces before him in the hollow way, at the point where the pile of dead ended, an open hand, illumined by the moon, emerged from the heap of men and horses. This hand had on one finger something that glittered, and was

a gold ring. The man bent down, and when he rose again there was no longer a ring on this finger. He did not exactly rise ; he remained in a savage and shy attitude, turning his back to the pile of dead, investigating the horizon, supporting himself on his two forefingers, and his head spying over the edge of the hollow way. The four paws of the jackal are suited for certain actions. Then, making up his mind, he rose, but at the same moment he started, for he felt that some one was holding him behind. He turned and found that it was the open hand which had closed and seized the skirt of his coat. An honest man would have been frightened, but this one began laughing.

" Hilloh ! " he said, " it is only the dead man. I prefer a ghost to a gendarme."

The hand, however, soon relaxed its hold, for efforts are quickly exhausted in the tomb.

" Can this dead man be alive ? " the marauder continued ; " let me have a look."

He bent down again, removed all the obstacles, seized the hand, liberated the head, pulled out the body, and a few minutes later dragged an inanimate or at least fainting man into the shadow of the hollow way. He was an officer of cuirassiers of a certain rank, for a heavy gold epaulette peeped out from under his cuirass. This officer had lost his helmet, and a furious sabre cut crossed his face, which was covered with blood. He did not appear, however, to have any bones broken, and through some fortunate accident, if such a word be possible here, the dead had formed an arch over him so as to save him from being crushed. His eyes were closed. He had on his cuirass the silver cross of the Legion of Honour, and the prowler tore away this cross, which disappeared in one of the gulfs he had under his blouse. After this he felt the officer's fob, found a watch, and took it ; then he felt in his pockets, and drew from them a purse. When he was at this stage of the assistance he was rendering the dying man, the officer opened his eyes.

" Thanks," he said, feebly.

The roughness of the man's movements, the freshness of the night, and the freely inhaled air had aroused him from his lethargy. The prowler did not answer, but raised his head. A sound of footsteps could be heard on the plain, it was probably

some patrol approaching. The officer murmured, for there was still the agony of death in his voice,—

"Who won the battle?"

"The English," the marauder answered.

The officer continued,—

"Feel in my pockets, you will find a purse and a watch, which you can take."

Though this was already done, the prowler did what was requested, and said,—

"There is nothing in them."

"I have been robbed," the officer continued, "I am sorry for it, as I meant the things for you."

The footsteps of the patrol became more and more distinct.

"Some one is coming," the marauder said, preparing to go away.

The officer, raising his arm with difficulty, stopped him.

"You have saved my life; who are you?"

The prowler answered rapidly and in a low voice,—"I belong, like yourself, to the French army, but I must leave you; for if I were caught I should be shot,—I have saved your life, so now get out of the scrape as you can.'"

"What is your rank?"

"Sergeant."

"Your name?"

"Thénardier."

"I shall not forget that name," the officer said; "and do you remember mine; it is Pontmercy."

Having narrated this incident, we will now resume the thread of our story. Jean Valjean was recaptured. As our readers will probably thank us for passing rapidly over painful details, we confine ourselves to the quotation of two paragraphs published by the newspapers of the day, a few months after the occurrence of the surprising events at M——. The first we take from the *Drapeau Blanc*, dated July 25, 1823.

"A bailiwick of the Pas de Calais has just been the scene of an uncommon event. A man, who was a stranger to the department and called M. Madeleine, had some years previously revived by a new process an old local trade, the manufacture of jet and black beads. He made his own fortune, and, let us add, that of the bailiwick, and in acknowledgment of his services he was appointed Mayor. The police discovered that

M. Madeleine was no other than an ex-convict, who had broken his ban, condemned in 1796 for robbery, of the name of Jean Valjean. He has been sent back to the Bagne. It appears that prior to his arrest he succeeded in withdrawing from M. Lafitte's a sum of more than half a million, which he had banked there, and which it is said that he had honestly acquired by his trade. Since his return to Toulon futile efforts have been made to discover where this amount is concealed."

The second article, which is rather more detailed, is extracted from the *Journal de Paris* of the same date :—

" An ex-convict of the name of Jean Valjean has just been tried at the Var assizes, under circumstances which attract attention. This villain had succeeded in deceiving the vigilance of the police, and had behaved so cleverly as to be made Mayor of one of our small towns in the north, where he established a rather considerable trade. He was at length unmasked and arrested through the indefatigable zeal of the public authorities. He had, as his concubine, a girl of the town, who died of a fit at the moment of his arrest. This scoundrel, who is endowed with Herculean strength, managed to escape, but three or four days later the police again captured him in Paris, at the moment when he was entering one of those small coaches which run from the capital to the village of Montfermeil (Seine et Oise). It is said that he took advantage of these three or four days liberty to withdraw from one of our chief bankers an amount estimated at six or seven hundred thousand francs. according to the indictment he buried it at some spot only known to himself, and it has not been found ; but, however this may be, this Jean Valjean has just been tried at Var assizes for a highway robbery, committed with violence some eight years ago upon one of those honest lads, who, as the patriarch of Ferney has said in immortal verse,—

> ' —De Savoie arrivent tous les ans
> Et dont la main légèrement essuie
> Ces longs canaux engorgés par la suie.'

This bandit made no defence, but it was proved by the skilful and eloquent organ of public justice that Jean Valjean was a member of a band of robbers in the south. Consequently Valjean was found guilty and sentenced to death. The criminal refused to appeal to the Court of Cassation, but the King,

in his inexhaustible mercy, deigned to commute his sentence into penal servitude for life. Jean Valjean was immediately removed to the galleys at Toulon."

It will not be forgotten that Jean Valjean had displayed religious tendencies at M——, and some of the papers, among them the *Constitutionnel*, regarded this commutation as a triumph of the Priest party. Jean Valjean changed his number at Toulon, and was known as 9430. Let us state here, once and for all, that with M. Madeleine the prosperity of M—— disappeared: all he had foreseen in his night of hesitation and fever was realized; his absence was in truth the absence of the soul. M. Madeleine's large work-shops were shut up; the buildings fell into a ruinous condition, and the artizans dispersed, some leaving the town, others the trade.

A very short time after the period when it occurred to the police that Jean Valjean, during his four days of liberty, had been prowling round Montfermeil, it was noticed in the same village that a certain old road-mender of the name of Boulatruelle was "up to his tricks" in the forest. It was believed generally that this Boulatruelle had been to the galleys: he was to some extent under police inspection, and as he could not find work anywhere, the administration employed him at a low wage as mender of the cross road from Gagny to Lagny. This Boulatruelle was a man looked on askance by the villageois, as he was too respectful, too humble, ready to doff his cap to everybody, trembling and fawning before the gendarmes, and probably allied with the robbers, so it was said, and suspected of lurking about the roads after dark. The only thing in his favour was that he was a drunkard.

This is what people fancied that they noticed. For some time past Boulatruelle had left work at an early hour, and gone into the forest with his pick-axe. He was met towards evening in the most desolate clearings, in the wildest thickets, apparently seeking something, and at times digging holes. The old women who passed at first took him for Beelzebub, who, according to a Montfermeil superstition, was believed to have buried treasure in the forest. Such meetings greatly annoyed Boulatruelle, and hence it was plain that he tried to hide himself, and that there was a mystery in what he was doing. It was said in the village, "It is clear that the fiend has made his

appearance. Boulatruelle saw him, and is seeking ; well, he is cunning enough to pocket Lucifer's treasure." The Voltairians added : " Will Boulatruelle cheat the demon, or the demon cheat Boulatruelle ? " while the old women crossed themselves repeatedly. Boulatruelle, however, discontinued his forest rambles, and regularly resumed his work, whereupon something else was talked about. Some persons, however, remained curious, thinking that there was probably in the affair, not the fabulous treasure of the demon, but something more palpable and tangible than his banknotes, and that the road-mender had doubtless found out half the secret. The most puzzled were the schoolmaster and Thénardier the publican, who was everybody's friend, and had not disdained an intimacy with Boulatruelle.

" He has been to the galleys," Thénardier would say. " Well, good gracious, we do not know who is there, or who may go there."

Boulatruelle, on going to work at day-break one morning, was surprised at seeing under a bush a spade and a pick, which " looked as if they were hidden ; " still he fancied that they belonged to Father Six-fours, the water-carrier, and did not think any more of the matter. On the evening of the same day, however, he saw, without being himself seen, as he was hidden behind a tree, " an individual who did not belong to these parts, and whom he, Boulatruelle, knew," proceeding towards the most retired part of the wood. This Thénardier translated as " a comrade at the galleys," but Boulatruelle obstinately refused to mention his name. This individual was carrying a bundle, something square, like a box or small chest. Boulatruelle was surprised, but it was not till some ten minutes later that the idea of following the " individual " occurred to him. But it was too late, the individual was already among the trees, night had fallen, and Boulatruelle was unable to catch him up. Then he resolved to watch the skirt of the wood, and the moon was shining. Boulatruelle, some two or three hours after, saw this individual come out of the wood, not carrying the box, however, but a spade and pick. Boulatruelle allowed him to pass, and did not address him, for he said to himself that the other man was thrice as strong as he, and being armed with a pick would probably smash him on recognizing him and finding himself recognized ; a touching effusion on the part of two old comrades

who suddenly meet. But the spade and pick were a ray of light for Boulatruelle ; he hurried to the bush at day-break, and no longer found them there. From this he concluded that his individual, on entering the wood, had dug a hole with his pick, burried his box in it, and then covered it up with the spade. Now, as the box was too small to contain a corpse, it must contain money, and hence his researches. Boulatruelle explored the forest in all directions, and especially at spots where the ground seemed to have been recently turned up, but it was all of no use, he discovered nothing. Nobody in Montfermeil thought any more of the matter, except some worthy gossips who said,—" You may be sure that the road-mender did not take all that trouble for nothing ; it is certain that the fiend has been here."

Toward the close of Oct., in the same year, 1823, the inhabitants of Toulon saw a vessel enter their port which had sustained some damage in a heavy storm. It was the *Orion*, which at a latter date was employed at Brest as a training school, but now formed part of the Mediterranean fleet. This vessel, battered as it was, for the sea had ill-treated it, produced an effect on entering the roads. It displayed some flag which obtained it the regulation salute of eleven guns, to which it replied round for round—a total of two-and-twenty rounds. It has been calculated that in salvos, royal and military politeness, exchanges of courtesy signals, formalities of roads and citadels, sunrise and sunset saluted every day by all the fortresses and vessels of war, opening and closing gates, etc., the civilized world fired every twenty-four hours, and in all parts of the globe, one hundred and fifty thousand useless rounds. At six francs a round, this makes 900,000 francs a day. Three hundred millions a year expended in smoke. During this time poor people are dying of starvation.

The presence of a man-of-war in a port has something about it which attracts and occupies the mob. It is grand, and the multitude love anything that is grand. A vessel of the line is one of the most magnificent encounters which the genius of man has with the might of nature.

Every day, from morning till night, the quays and piers of Toulon were covered with numbers of idlers, whose business it was to look at the *Orion*. This vessel had long been in a sickly state. During previous voyages barnacles had collected on her

hull to such an extent that she lost half her speed ; she had been taken into dry dock the year previous to scrape off these barnacles, and then put to sea again. But this scraping had injured the bolts, and when off the Balearic Isles, she sprang a leak, and took in water, as vessels were not coppered in those days. A violent equinoctial gale supervened, which injured her larboard bows and destroyed the fore chains. In consequence of this damage the *Orion* put into Toulon, and anchored near the arsenal for repairs. The hull was uninjured, but a few planks had been unnailed here and there to let air in, as is usually the case.

One morning the crowd witnessed an accident. The crew were engaged in bending the sails, and the top-man, who had hold of the upper corner of the main-top-sail, lost his balance. He was seen to totter, the crowd on the arsenal quay uttered a cry, his head dragged him downwards, and he turned round the yard with his hands stretched down to the water, but he caught hold of the foot-rope as he passed it, first with one hand, then with the other, and remained hanging from it. The sea was below him at a dizzy depth, and the shock of his fall had given the foot-rope a violent swinging movement. The man swung at the end of rope like a stone in a sling. To go to his assistance would be running a frightful risk, and not one of the sailors, all coast fishermen lately called in for duty, dared to venture it. Still the unhappy top-man was growing tired : his agony could not be seen in his face, but his exhaustion could be distinguished in all his limbs, and his arms were awfully dragged. Any effort he made to raise himself only caused the foot-rope to oscillate the more, and he did not cry out, for fear of exhausting his strength. The minute was close at hand when he must leave go the rope, and every now and then all heads were turned away not to see it happen. All at once a man could be seen climbing up the shrouds with the agility of a tiger-cat. As he was dressed in red this man was a convict ; as he wore a green cap he was a convict for life. On reaching the top a puff of wind blew away his cap, and displayed a white head ; hence he was not a young man.

A convict, employed on board with a gang, had in fact at once run up to the officer of the watch, and while all the sailors trembled and recoiled, asked permission to risk his life in saving the top-man. At a nod of assent from the officer he broke

with one blow of a hammer the chain riveted to his ankle, took up a rope, and darted up the shrouds. No one noticed at the moment with what ease this chain was broken ; and the fact was not remembered till afterwards. In a second he was upon the yard, where he stood for a little while as if looking round him. These seconds, during which the wind swung the top-man at the end of a thread, seemed ages to the persons who were looking at him. At length the convict raised his eyes to heaven and advanced a step. The crowd breathed again, as they saw him run along the yard. On reaching the end he fastened to it the rope he had brought with him, let it hang down, and then began going down it hand over hand. This produced a feeling of indescribable agony, for, instead of one man hanging over the gulf, there were now two. Ten thousand eyes were fixed on the group : not a cry, not a word could be heard. The convict, in the interim, had managed to get close to the sailor, and it was high time, for a minute later the man, exhausted and desperate, would have let himself drop into the sea. The convict fastened him securely with the rope to which he clung with one hand, while he worked with the other. At length he was seen to climb back to the yard and haul the sailor up : he supported him there for a moment, to let him regain his strength, then took him in his arms and carried him along the yard to the cap, and thence to the top, where he left him with his comrades. The crowd applauded him, and several old sergeants of the chain-gang had tears in their eyes : women embraced each other on the quay, and every voice could be heard shouting with a species of frenzy, —"Pardon for that man!"

The convict, however, began going down again immediately to rejoin his gang. In order to do so more rapidly he slid down a rope, and ran along a lower yard. All eyes followed him, and at one moment the spectators felt afraid, for they fancied they could see him hesitate and totter, either through fatigue or dizziness ; all at once the crowd uttered a terrible cry,—the convict had fallen into the sea. The fall was a dangerous one, for the *Algésiras* frigate was anchored near the *Orion*, and the poor galley slave had fallen between the two ships, and might be sucked under one of them. Four men hastily got into a boat and the crowd encouraged them for all felt anxious again. The man did not come to the surface again, and dis-

appeared in the sea without making a ripple, just as if he had fallen into a barrel of oil. They dragged for him, but in vain; they continued the search till nightfall, but his body was not even found. The next day the Toulon paper printed the following lines:—"Nov. 17, 1823.—Yesterday a convict, one of a gang on board the *Orion*, fell into the sea and was drowned, as he was returning from assisting a sailor. His body has not been found, and is supposed to be entangled among the piles at Arsenal Point. The man was imprisoned under the No. 9430, and his name was Jean Valjean."

Montfermeil is situated between Livry and Chelles, on the southern slope of the lofty plateau which separates the Orque from the Marne. At the present day it is a rather large place, adorned with stucco villas all the year round, and with holiday-making cits on Sunday. In 1823 it was merely a village in the woods. It was a quiet, pleasant spot. Persons lived there cheaply that peasant life which is so tranquil and abundant. The only thing was that water was scarce, owing to the elevation of the plateau, and it had to be fetched from some distance. That end of the village which was on the Gagny side obtained its water from the splendid ponds in the forest there; but the other end, which surrounds the church and is on the Chelles side, could only obtain drinking water from a little spring about a quarter of an hour's walk from Montfermeil, near the road to Chelles; laying in water was therefore a hard task for every family. The large houses and the aristocracy, among which Thénardier's pot-house may be reckoned, paid a liard a bucket to a man whose trade it was, and who earned by it about eight sous a day. But this man only worked till seven P. M. in summer, and till five in winter; and once night had set in and the ground-floor shutters were closed, any person who had no water to drink must either fetch it or go without.

This was the terror of the poor creature whom the reader will not have forgotten, little Cosette. It will be remembered that Cosette was useful to the Thénardiers in two ways,—they made the mother pay and the child act as servant. Hence when the mother ceased payment, the Thénardiers kept Cosetted who took the place of a servant. In this quality she had to fetch water when it was wanted, and the child, terrified at the

idea of going to the spring at night, was very careful that the house should never be without water. Christmas of 1823 was peculiarly brilliant at Montfermeil; the beginning of the winter was mild, and there had been neither snow nor frost. Some mountebanks, who came from Paris, had obtained leave from the mayor to erect their booth in the village high street, and a party of travelling hawkers had put their stalls in the church square, and even in the lane in which Thénardier's pot-house was situated. This filled the inns and pot-houses, and produced a noisy, joyous life in this quiet little place.

On the Christmas evening several carters and hawkers were sitting to drink, round four or five candles, in Thénardier's tap-room. Madame Thénardier was watching the supper, which was roasting before a bright clear fire, while her husband was drinking with his guests and talking politics.

Cosette was seated at her usual place, the cross bar of the table, near the chimney; she was in rags, her bare feet were thrust into wooden shoes, and she was knitting, by the fire light, stockings intended for the young Thénardiers. Two merry children could be heard laughing and prattling in an adjoining room; they were Eponine and Azelma. A cat-o'-nine-tails hung from a nail by the side of the chimney. At times, the cry of a baby somewhere in the house was audible through the noise of the tap-room; it was a little boy Madame Thénardier had given birth to one winter, "without knowing how," she used to say, "it was the effect of the cold," and who was a little over three years of age. The mother suckled him, but did not love him; when his cries became too troublesome, Thénardier would say—"There's your brat squalling; go and see what he wants." "Stuff," the mother would answer, "he's a nuisance;" and the poor deserted little wretch would continue to cry in the darkness.

Up to the present, only a side-view of the Thénardiers has been offered the reader of this book, but the moment has now arrived to walk round the couple, and regard them all sides. Thénardier had passed his fiftieth year, Madame Thénardier was just on her fortieth, which is fifty in a woman; and in this way there was a balance of age between husband and wife. Our readers may probably have retained from the first meeting some recollection of this tall, light-haired, red, fat, square, enormous, and active woman; she belonged, as we

said, to the race of giantesses, who show themselves at fairs, with paving stones hanging from their hair. She did everything in the house; made the beds, cleaned the rooms, was cook and laundress, produced rain and fine weather, and played the devil. Her only assistant was Cosette, a mouse in the service of an elephant. All trembled at the sound of her voice, windows, furniture, and people; and her large face, dotted with freckles, looked like a skimmer. She had a beard, and was the ideal of a Billingsgate porter dressed in female attire. She swore splendidly, and boasted of being able to crack a walnut with a blow of her fist. Had it not been for the romances she had read, and which at times made the finnikin woman appear under the ogress, no one would ever have dreamed of thinking that she was feminine. She seemed to be the product of a cross between a young damsel and a fishfag. When people heard her speak, they said,—"'Tis a gendarme;" when they saw her drink, they said,—"'Tis a carter;" and when they saw her treatment of Cosette, they said,—"'Tis the hangman;" when she was quiet, a tooth projected from her mouth.

Thénardier was a short, thin, sallow, angular, bony, weak man, who looked ill, and was perfectly well—his cunning began with this. He smiled habitually through caution, and was polite to nearly everybody, even to the beggar whom he refused a halfpenny. He had the eye of a ferret and the face of a man of letters, and greatly resembled the portraits of Abbé Delille. His coquetry consisted in drinking with carriers, and no one had ever been able to intoxicate him. He wore a blouse, and under it an old black coat, and had pretensions to literature and materialism. There were some names he frequently uttered in order to support an argument, such as Voltaire, Raynal, Parny, and, strangely enough, St. Augustine. He declared that he had "a system." He was a thorough scamp, however. It will be remembered that he asserted he had been a soldier, and told people with some pomp how at Waterloo, where he was sergeant in the 6th or 9th light something, he alone, against a squadron of Hussars of Death, had covered with his body and saved "a severely wounded general." Hence came his flaming sign, and the name by which his house was generally known, *The Sergeant of Waterloo*. He was liberal, classical, and Bona-

partist; he had subscribed to the Champ d'Asile, and it was said in the village that he had studied for the priesthood. We believe that he had simply studied in Holland to be an inn-keeper. This scoundrel of a composite order was in all probability some Fleming of Lille, a Frenchman at Paris, a Belgian at Brussels, conveniently striding over two frontiers. We know his prowess at Waterloo, and, as we see, he exaggerated slightly. Ebb and flow and wandering adventures were the elements of his existence. A tattered conscience entails an irregular life, and probably at the stormy period of June 18th, 1815, Thénardier belonged to that variety of marauding sutlers to whom we have alluded, who go about the country selling to some and robbing others, and moving about in a halting cart after marching troops, with the instinct of always joining the victorious army. When the campaign was over, having, as he said, "some brads," he opened a pot-house at Montfermeil. These "brads," consisting of purses and watches, gold rings, and silver crosses, collected in ditches filled with corpses, did not make a heavy total, and did not carry very far this sutler turned inn-keeper.

Thénardier had only one thought—to enrich himself, but he did not succeed, for a suitable stage was wanting for this great talent. Thénardier ruined himself at Montfermeil, if ruin is possible at zero; in Switzerland or the Pyrenees he would have become a millionaire. But where fate fastens a landlord he must browse. In this year, 1823, Thénardier was in debt to the amount of 1500 francs, which rendered him anxious. Whatever might be the obstinate injustice of destiny against him, Thénardier was one of those men who thoroughly understand, and in the most modern fashion, the theory which is a virtue in barbarous nations, and an article of sale among civilized nations—hospitality. He was also an admirable poacher, and renowned for the correctness of his aim, and he had a certain cold and peaceful laugh, which was peculiarly dangerous.

His landlord theories burst forth from him at times in flashes, and he had professional aphorisms which he drove into his wife's mind. "The duty of a landlord," he said one day savagely, and in a low voice, "is to sell to the first comer, ragouts, rest, light, fire, dirty sheets, chamber-maids, fleas, and smiles; to arrest passers-by, empty small purses, and

honestly lighten heavy ones; to shelter respectfully travelling families, rasp the husband, peck the wife, and pluck the children; to set a price on the open window, the shut window, the chimney corner, the easy chair, the sofa, the stool, the feather bed, the mattress, and the palliasse; to know how much the reflection wears off the looking-glass, and charge for it, and by the five hundred thousand fiends to make the traveller pay for everything, even to the flies his dog eats!"

Four new travellers arrived. Cosette was sorrowfully reflecting, for though only eight years of age she had already suffered so much that she thought with the mournful air of an old woman. Her eyelid was blackened by a blow which the woman had given her, which made Madame say now and then, "How ugly she is with her black eye!" Cosette was thinking then that it was late, very late; that she had been suddenly obliged to fill the jugs and bottles in the rooms of the travellers who had just arrived, and that there was no water in the cistern. What reassured her most was the fact that but little water was drunk at the *Sergeant of Waterloo*. There was no lack of thirsty souls, but it was that sort of thirst which applies more readily to the wine jar than to the water bottle. Any one who asked for a glass of water among the glasses of wine would have appeared a savage to all these men. At one moment, however, the child trembled; her mistress raised the cover of a stew-pan, bubbling on a stove, then took a glass and hurried to the cistern. The child had turned, and was watching all the movements. A thin stream of water ran from the tap and filled the glass. "Hilloh," she said, "there is no water;" then she was silent for a moment, during which the child did not breathe.

"Well," Madame Thénardier continued, as she examined the half-filled glass, "this will be enough."

Cosette returned to her work, but for more than a quarter of an hour she felt her heart beating in her chest. She counted the minutes that passed thus, and wished that it were next morning. From time to time one of the topers looked out into the street and said, "It's as black as pitch," or "A man would have to be a cat to go into the street at this hour without a lantern," and Cosette shivered. All at once, one of the pedlars lodging at the inn came in and said in a harsh voice,—

"My horse has had no water."

"Oh yes, it has," said Madame Thénardier.

"I tell you it has not, mother," the pedlar went on.

Cosette had crept out from under the table.

"Oh yes, sir," she said, "your horse drank a bucket-full, and I gave it the water and talked to it."

This was not true.

"There's a girl no bigger than one's fist who tells a lie as big as a house," the dealer exclaimed. "I tell you it has not had any water, you little devil; it has a way of breathing which I know well when it has not drunk."

Cosette persisted, and added in a voice rendered hoarse by agony, and which was scarce audible,—

"Oh, indeed, the horse drank a lot."

"Enough of this," the dealer said savagely "give my horse water."

Cosette went back under the table.

"Well, that is but fair," said Madame, "if the brute has not drunk it ought to drink." Then she looked around her. "Why, where is the little devil?"

She stooped down, and discovered Cosette hidden at the other end of the table, almost under the feet of the topers.

"Come out of that," her mistress shouted.

Cosette came out of the hole in which she had hidden herself, and the landlady continued,—

"Miss what's your name, give the horse water."

"There is no water, Madame," Cosette said, faintly.

Her mistress threw the street door wide open.

"Well, go and fetch some."

Cosette hung her head, and fetched an empty bucket standing in a corner near the chimney; it was larger than herself, and she could have sat down in it comfortably. Madame Thénardier returned to her stove and tasted the contents of a stew-pan with a wooden spoon, while growling,—

"There's plenty at the spring. I believe it would have been better to sift the onions."

Then she rummaged in a drawer which contained halfpence, pepper, and shalots.

"Here, Miss Toad," she added, "as you come back, you will fetch a loaf from the baker's. Here's a fifteen sous piece."

Cosette had a small pocket in her apron, in which she placed the coin; then she stood motionless, bucket in hand,

and with the door open before her. She seemed to be waiting for some one to come to her help.

"Be off," her mistress shouted.

Cosette went out and shut the door after her.

The file of open-air shops, in Montfermeil, ran as far as Thénardier's inn. These stalls, owing to the approaching passing of persons going to midnight mass, were all lit up with candles in paper funnels, which, as the schoolmaster who was seated at this moment in Thénardier's tap-room, declared, produced a "magical effect." To make up for this, not a star glittered in the sky. The last of these shops, right facing Thénardier's door, was a child's toy establishment, all flashing with tinsel, glass-beads, and magnificent things in block-tin. Right in front, the dealer had placed upon a white napkin an enormous doll, nearly two feet high, which was dressed in a pink crape gown, with golden wheat-ears in her hair, which was real hair, and had enamel eyes. The whole day had this marvel been displayed, to the amazement of all passers-by under ten years of age, but not a mother in Montfermeil had been rich enough or extravagant enough to give it to her child. Eponine and Azelma had spent hours in contemplating it, and even Cosette had ventured to take a furtive look at it.

At the moment when Cosette went out, bucket in hand, though she felt so sad and desolate, she could not refrain from raising her eyes to the prodigious doll, the "lady," as she called it. The poor child stopped petrified, for she had not seen this doll so close before. The whole stall seemed to her a palace, and this doll was not a doll, but a vision. She looked at the fine dress, the long smooth hair, and thought, "How happy that doll must be!" In this adoration she forgot everything, even the task on which she was sent, but suddenly the rough voice of her mistress recalled her to the reality. "What, you little devil, you have not gone! just wait till I come to you, you little toad." Madame Thénardier had taken a look out into the street, and noticed Cosette in ecstasy. The child ran off with her bucket, making enormous strides. As Thénardier's inn was in that part of the village near the church, Cosette had to fetch the water from the spring in the forest on the Chelles side. She did not look at another stall; so long as she was in the lane and the vicinity

of the church, the illuminated booths lit up the road, but the last gleam of the last stall soon disappeared, and the poor child found herself in darkness. She went further into it, but, as she felt some emotion while walking, she shook the handle of her bucket as much as she could, which produced a noise that gave her company. The further she went, the more dense the gloom became; there was no one in the streets except a woman, who turned on seeing her pass, and muttered between her teeth, "Wherever can the child be going? can she be a goblin?" Then she recognized Cosette. "Why," she said, "it is the Lark." Cosette in this way went through the labyrinth of winding deserted streets which end the village of Montfermeil on the side of Chelles; and so long as she had houses, or even walls on both sides of the way, she walked rather boldly. From time to time she saw a candle glimmering through the crack of a shutter; it was light and life, people were there, and this reassured her. Still, in proportion as she advanced, her step became slower, as if mechanically, and when she had passed the corner of the last house, Cosette stopped. Going beyond the last stall had been difficult, but going further than the last house became an impossibility. She put her bucket on the ground, plunged her hand into her hair, and began scratching her head slowly—a gesture peculiar to terrified and undecided children. It was no longer Montfermeil, but the fields, and black deserted space was before her. She looked despairingly at this space in which there was nobody, but where there were beasts, and there might be ghosts. She looked out, and heard the beasts walking in the grass, and distinctly saw the ghosts moving among the trees. Then she took her bucket again, and fear gave her boldness. "Well," she said, "I will tell her that there was no water;" and she boldly re-entered Montfermeil. She had scarce gone one hundred yards when she stopped, and began scratching her head again. Now it was her mistress who appeared to her—her hideous mistress with her hyæna mouth, and her eyes flashing with passion. The child took a lamentable glance before and behind her. What should she do? what would become of her? where should she go? It was from her mistress she recoiled; she turned back in the direction of the spring, and began running. She left the village running, she entered the wood running, look-

ing at nothing, hearing nothing. She did not stop till breath failed her, but she still went on ahead, wildly. While running she felt inclined to cry, for the nocturnal rustling of the forest completely surrounded her. She did not think, she did not see; the immensity of night was opposed to this little creature; on one side was darkness, on the other an atom. It was only seven or eight minutes' walk from the skirt of the wood to the spring, and Cosette knew the road from having gone there several times by day. Strange to say, she did not lose her way, for a remnant of instinct vaguely guided her; still she did not look either to the right or left, for fear of seeing things in the branches and shrubs. In this way she reached the spring; it was a narrow natural basin hollowed by the water in the dry soil, about two feet in depth, surrounded by moss and that gauffered grass which is called Henri IV.'s ruff, and paved with a few heavy stones. A rivulet escaped from it with a little gentle murmur.

Cosette did not take the time to breathe; it was very dark, but she was accustomed to come to this fountain. She felt in the obscurity for a young oak that leant over the spring, and usually served her as a support, caught a branch, stooped down, and plunged the bucket into the water. She was in such a violent state that her strength was tripled. While thus bent, she did not notice that the pocket of her apron emptied itself into the stream, and that the fifteen sous piece fell into the water. Cosette neither saw nor heard it fall; she drew up the bucket nearly full, and placed it on the grass. This done, she felt that she was exhausted with fatigue; the effect of filling the bucket had been so great that she found it impossible to move a step. She fell on to the grass, and lay there utterly exhausted. Over her head the sky was covered with large black clouds, which seemed like smoke. Jupiter was setting in the profundity; the child gazed with a wondering eye at this large star, which she did not know, and which terrified her. The planet, in fact, was at this moment very near the horizon, and was passing through a dense fog, which gave it a horrible redness. The fog, which was of a gloomy purple hue, enlarged the planet, and it looked like a luminous wound. A cold wind blew from the plain; the wood was dark, but there was no rustling of leaves, and none of the vague and fresh gleams of summer. Large

branches stood out frightfully, and shapeless, stunted bushes soughed in the glades. The tall grass twined under the breeze like eels, and the brambles writhed like long arms provided with claws seeking to clutch their prey. A few withered patches of fern, impelled by the breeze, passed rapidly, and seemed to be flying before something that was coming up.

Darkness produces a dizziness. Man requires light, and any one who enters the opposite of light, feels his heart contracted. When the eye sees darkness, the soul sees trouble.

Without understanding what she experienced, Cosette felt herself affected by this black enormity of nature. She shuddered, and words fail us to describe the strange nature of this shudder which chilled her to the heart. Then, by a species of instinct, and in order to emerge from this singular state which she did not understand, but which terrified her, she began counting aloud one, two, three, four, up to ten, and when she finished, she began again. This restored her to a true perception of the things that surrounded her: she felt the coldness of her hands, which she had wetted in drawing the water. She rose, for fear had seized on her again, a natural and insurmountable fear. She had only one thought left, to fly, fly at full speed through the wood, and across the fields, as far as the houses, the windows, and the lighted candles. Her eyes fell on the bucket before her; and such was the terror with which her mistress inspired her that she did not dare fly without the bucket. She seized the handle with both hands, and found it difficult to lift. She proceeded thus for about a dozen yards, but the bucket was full and heavy, and she was compelled to set it on the ground. She breathed for a moment, and then lifted the bucket and started again, this time going a little farther. But she was still obliged to stop once more, and after a few moments' rest, set out again. She walked with body bent forward and drooping head, like an old woman; and the weight of the bucket stiffened her thin arms. The iron handle swelled and froze her small white hands. From time to time she was forced to stop, and each time she did so, the cold water from the bucket plashed her bare legs. This occurred in the heart of a wood, at night in winter, far from any human eye. She was a child of eight years of age, and GOD alone at this moment saw this sorrowful sight, and her mother too, doubtless!

for there are things which open the eyes of the dead in their graves.

She breathed with a sort of dolorous rattle; sobs contracted her throat, but she did not dare cry, for she was so afraid of her mistress, even at a distance. It was her habit always to imagine Madame Thénardier present. Still, she did not make much progress in this way, and she walked very slowly, although she strove to lessen the length of her halts and walk as long as she possibly could between them. She thought with agony that it would take her more than an hour to get back to Montfermeil in this way, and that her mistress would beat her. This agony was mingled with her terror at being alone in the wood at night; she was worn out with fatigue, and had not yet left the forest. On reaching an old chestnut tree which she knew, she made a longer halt than the others to rest herself thoroughly; then she collected all her strength, took up the bucket again, and began walking courageously. Still the poor little creature in her despair could not refrain, from exclaiming,—"Oh God! Oh God!" All at once she suddenly felt that the bucket no longer weighed anything; a hand which seemed to her enormous, had seized it, and was vigorously lifting it. She raised her head, and saw a tall black form walking by her side; it was a man who had come up behind her, and whom she had not heard. This man, without saying a word, had seized the handle of the bucket which she was carrying. There is an instinct in every meeting of this life, and the child felt no fear.

CHAPTER VIII

On the afternoon of this same Christmas day, 1823, a man walked for a long time about the most desolate part of the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, at Paris. He seemed to be looking for a lodging, and to stop for choice at the most shabby houses in this skirt of the Faubourg St. Marceau. As we shall see presently, this man had really hired a bed-room in this isolated district. Both in dress and person, he realized the type of what might be called the respectable mendicant, or extreme misery combined with extreme cleanliness. He wore a very old and carefully-brushed round hat, a thread-

bare coat of coarse yellow ochre coloured cloth, a colour which was not absolutely odd at that day, a long waistcoat with enormous pockets, black breeches which had turned grey at the knees, black worsted stockings, and stout shoes with brass buckles. He looked like the ex-tutor of a good family returned from emigration. From his white hair, wrinkled forehead, livid lips, and his face in which everything revealed weariness of life, he might have been supposed much beyond sixty years of age; but his firm though slow step, and the singular vigour imprinted on all his movements, made him look scarce fifty. His lip was contracted by a strange curve, which seemed stern, but was humble, and there was a lugubrious serenity in his look. He carried in his left hand a small parcel tied up in a handkerchief; and in his right he had a stick cut from a hedge. This stick had been carved with some care, and was not too bad looking; advantage had been taken of the knots, and a coral knob had been made with red sealing wax,—it was a cudgel and seemed a cane.

At this period Louis XVIII. went almost daily to Choisy le Roi, which was one of his favourite drives. At two o'clock the royal carriage and escort could almost invariably be seen passing at full gallop along the Boulevard de l'Hôpital.

The infallible passage of the king at the same hour was the daily event of the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. The promenader in the yellow coat plainly did not belong to that quarter, and probably not to Paris, for he was ignorant of the fact. When at two o'clock the royal carriage, surrounded by Life Guards with their silver aiguillettes, turned into the Boulevard, after coming round Salpetrière, he seemed surprised and almost terrified. As he was alone in the walk, he quickly concealed himself behind an angle of the wall; but this did not prevent the Duc d'Havre from noticing him. The Duc, as Captain of the Guards on duty that day, was seated in the carriage opposite to the king, and said to his Majesty,—"There is an ill-looking fellow." The policemen, who cleared the way for the king, also noticed him, and one of them received orders to follow him. But the man turned into the solitary streets of the Faubourg, and, as night was setting in, the agent lost his trail. At nightfall he entered *The Pewter Platter* which was at that time the office of

the Lagny coach, which started at half-past four. The horses were put in, and the passengers, summoned by the driver, were hastily clambering up the iron steps of the vehicle.

The traveller paid his fare to Lagny, and the coach started. After passing the city gate, the driver tried to get up a conversation, but the traveller only answered in monosyllables. As the night was cold, he wrapped himself in his cloak, but the passengers did not seem to notice it. At about six o'clock they reached Chelles, where the driver stopped for a moment to let his horses breathe, at an inn opened in the old buildings of the Royal Abbey.

"I shall get down here," the man said.

He took his bundle and stick, and jumped off the coach. A moment after he had disappeared, but he did not enter the inn. When the coachman started again a few moments after, he did not meet him in the high street of Lagny, and he turned round to his inside passengers:—

"That man," he said, "does not belong to these parts, for I do not know him. He looks as if he had not a penny, and yet he don't care for money, as he paid his fare to Lagny and only came as far as Chelles. It is night, all the houses are closed, he has not gone into the inn, and yet I can't see him, so he must have sunk into the ground."

The man had not sunk into the ground, but walked hastily along the main street of Chelles, in the darkness; then he turned to his left, before reaching the church, into a cross-road that runs to Montfermeil like a man who knows the country and had been there before. He followed this road rapidly, and at the spot where it is intersected by the old road that runs from Lagny to Gagny, he heard wayfarers coming. He hurriedly concealed himself in a ditch, and waited till they had passed; the precaution, however, was almost superfluous, for, as we have said, it was a very dark December night, and only two or three stars were visible in the sky. The man did not return to the Montfermeil road, but went to his right, across the fields, and hurried in the direction of the wood. When he was in it, he slackened his pace, and began looking carefully at all the trees, walking step by step, as if seeking and following a mysterious road known to himself alone. There was a moment at which he seemed to lose himself and appeared undecided, but at last, by repeated

groping, he reached a glade in which there was a pile of large white stones. He walked hurriedly toward these stones, and attentively examined them, as if passing them in review. A large tree, covered with those excrescences which are the warts of vegetation, was a few paces from the heap; he went up to it, and passed his hand over the back as if trying to recognize and count all the warts. Opposite this tree, which was an ash, there was a sickly chestnut shedding its bark, upon which a ring of zinc had been placed as a poultice; he stood on tip toe and felt this ring, then he examined for some time the ground in the space contained between the tree and the stones, as if assuring himself that the ground had not been freshly turned up. This done, he looked about him, and resumed his walk through the wood.

It was this man who came across Cosette. While proceeding in the direction of Montfermeil, he perceived this little shadow depositing a load on the ground, then taking it up again, and continuing her journey. He went up and saw that it was a young child carrying an enormous bucket; then he drew to her side, and silently took the bucket handle.

Cosette, as we stated, was not frightened. The man spoke to her in a serious, almost low voice, —

"My child, what you are carrying is very heavy."

Cosette raised her head and replied, "Yes, sir."

"Give it to me," the man continued, "I will carry it."

Cosette let go the bucket, and the man walked on by her side.

"It is really very heavy," he muttered; then added, "What is your age, little one?"

"Eight years, sir."

"And have you come far with this?"

"From the spring in the wood."

"And how far have you to go?"

"About a quarter of an hour's walk."

The man stopped for a moment, and then suddenly said,—

"Then you have not a mother?"

"I do not know," the child answered.

Before the man had time to speak, she continued,—

"I do not think so, other girls have one, but I have not."

And after a silence, she added,—

"I believe that I never had one."

The man stopped, put the bucket on the ground, and laid

his two hands on her shoulders, making an effort to see her face in the darkness. Cosette's thin sallow countenance was vaguely designed in the vivid gleam of the sky.

"What is your name?" the man asked her.

"Cosette."

The man seemed to have an electric shock; he looked at her again, then removed his hands, took the bucket up again, and continued his walk. A moment after he asked,—

"Where do you live, little one?"

"At Montfermeil, if you know the place."

"Are we going there?"

"Yes, sir."

There was another pause, and then he began again.

"Who was it that sent you to fetch water from the wood at this hour?"

"Madame Thénardier."

The man continued with an accent which he strove to render careless, but in which there was, for all that, a singular tremor.

"What is this Madame Thénardier?"

"She is my mistress," the child said, "and she keeps the inn."

"The inn?" remarked the man; "well, I am going to lodge there to-night. Show me the way."

"We are going to it"

Though the man walked rather quickly, Cosette had no difficulty in keeping up with him; she no longer felt fatigue, and from time to time raised her eyes to this man with a sort of indescribable calmness and confidence. She had never been taught to turn her eyes towards Providence, and yet she felt within her something that resembled hope and joy, and which rose to heaven. After the lapse of a few minutes the man continued,

"Does Madame Thénardier keep no servant? Is there no one but you?"

"There are two little girls, Eponine and Zelma."

"Who are they?"

"They are Madame Thénardier's daughters."

"And what do they do?"

"Oh!" said the child, "they have handsome dolls, and things all covered with gold. They play about and amuse themselves."

"And you?"

"Oh, I work."

"All day?"

The child raised her large eyes, in which stood a tear, in visible in the darkness, and replied softly,—

"Yes, sir." After a silence she continued. "Sometimes, when I have finished my work and they allow me, I amuse myself. But I have not many toys. Ponine and Zelma do not like me to play with their dolls, and I have only a little leaden sword, no longer than that."

The child held out her little finger.

"And which does not cut?"

"Oh, yes, sir," said the child, "it cuts salad, and chops flies' heads off."

They reached the village, and Cosette guided the stranger through the streets. When they passed the baker's, Cosette did not think of the loaf which she was to bring in. The man had ceased questioning her, and preserved a gloomy silence.

When they approached the inn, Cosette touched his arm timidly.

"We are close to the house, will you let me carry my bucket now?"

"Why?"

"Because Madame will be at me if she sees that it has been carried for me."

The man gave her the bucket, and a moment later they were at the door of the pot-house.

Cosette could not refrain from taking a side glance at the large doll which was displayed at the toy-shop, and then tapped at the door; it opened, and Madame Thénardier appeared, candle in hand.

"Oh, it's you, you little devil: well, I'll be hanged if you have not taken time enough; you've been playing, I expect."

"Madame," said Cosette, with a violent tremor "this gentleman wants a bed-room."

Madame Thénardier exchanged her coarse look for an amiable grimace, a change peculiar to landladies, and greedily turned her eyes on the new comer.

The inspection of the stranger's clothes and luggage, which the landlady took in at a glance, caused the amiable grimace to disappear. She said drily,—

"Come in, my good man."

The "good man" entered; the landlady gave him a second look, carefully examined his thread-bare coat and broken-brimmed hat, and consulted her husband, who was still drinking with the carter, by a toss of the head, a curl of her nose, and a wink. The husband answered, with that imperceptible movement of the fore-finger which, laid on the puffed-out lips, signifies,—"No go." Upon this the landlady exclaimed,—

"My good man, I am very sorry, but I haven't a bed-room disengaged."

"Put me where you like," the man said, "in the loft or the stable. I will pay as if it were a bed-room."

"Forty sous."

"Be it so."

"Forty sous!" a carrier whispered to the landlady; "why, it is only twenty sous."

"It's forty for a man like him," Madame Thénardier replied in the same tone, "I do not lodge poor people under."

"That is true," the husband added gently; "it injures a house to have customers of that sort."

In the meanwhile the man, after leaving his bundle and stick on a form, sat down at a table on which Cosette had hastened to place a bottle of wine and a glass. The man, who scarce moistened his lips with the glass of wine he poured out, gazed at the child with strange attention. Cosette was ugly, but had she been happy she might possibly have been pretty. Her large eyes, buried in a species of shadow, were almost extinguished by constant crying, while the corners of her mouth had the curve of habitual agony, which may be observed in condemned prisoners and patients who are given over. The fire light, which shone upon her at this moment, brought out the angles of her bones, and rendered her thinness frightfully visible. Her entire clothing was one rag, which would have aroused pity in summer, and caused horror in winter. She had only torn calico upon her person, and not a morsel of woollen stuff: her skin was here and there visible, and everywhere could be distinguished blue or blacks marks, indicating the spots where her mistress had beaten her. Her bare legs were red and rough, and the hollow between her shoulder-blades would have moved you to

tears. The whole person of this child, her attitude, the sound of her voice, the interval between one word and the next, her look, her silence, her slightest movement, expressed and translated but one idea—fear. Fear was spread over her; she was, so to speak, clothed in it. There was a corner in her eye in which terror lurked. This fear was so great that Cosette, on returning wet through, did not dare go to the fire, but silently began her work again. The man in the yellow coat did not take his eyes off Cosette. All at once her mistress cried,—

"Hilloh! where's the loaf?"

Cosette had completely forgotten the loaf, and had recourse to the expedient of terrified children,—she told a falsehood.

"Madame, the baker's was shut up."

"You ought to have knocked."

"I did so, but he would not open."

"I shall know to-morrow whether that is the truth," said her mistress, "and if it is not, look out, that's all. In the meanwhile give me back my fifteen-sous piece."

Cosette plunged her hand into the pocket of her apron and turned green: the coin was no longer in it.

Cosette turned her pocket out, but there was nothing in it. The wretched little creature could not find a word to say, she was petrified.

"Have you lost it?" her mistress asked, "or are you trying to rob me?"

At the same time she stretched out her hand to the cat-o'-nine-tails; this formidable gesture restored Cosette the strength to cry,—

"Mercy, madame; I will never do it again."

The man in the yellow coat had been feeling in his waistcoat pocket, though no one noticed it. Moreover, the other guests were drinking or card-playing, and paid no attention to him. Cosette had retreated in agony to the chimney corner, shivering to make herself as little as she could, and protect her poor half-naked limbs. Her mistress raised her arm.

"I beg your pardon, madame," said the man, "but just now I saw something fall out of the little girl's pocket and rolling away. It may be that."

At the same time he stooped and appeared to be searching for a moment.

"Yes, here it is," he continued, as he rose and held out a coin to the landlady.

"Yes, that's it," she said.

It was not the real coin, it was a twenty-sous piece, but madame made a profit by the transaction. She put it into her pocket, and confined herself to giving the child a stern glance, saying,—"That had better not happen again."

Cosette returned to what her mistress called her niche, and her large eyes, fixed on the strange traveller, began to assume an expression they had never had before. It was no longer a simple astonishment, but a sort of stupefied confidence was mingled with it.

At this moment a door opened, and Eponine and Azelma came in. They were really two pretty little girls, rather tradesmen's daughters than peasants, and very charming, one with her auburn well-smoothed tresses, the other with long black plaits hanging down her back; both were quick, clean, plump, fresh, and pleasant to look on through their beaming health. They were warmly clothed, but with such maternal art that the thickness of the stuff did not remove anything of the coquetry of the style; winter was foreseen, but spring was not effaced. In their dress, their gaiety, and the noise which they made, there was a certain queenliness. When they came in, their mother said to them in a scolding voice, which was full of adoration, "There you are, then."

Then, drawing them on to her knees in turn, smoothing their hair, retying their ribbons, and letting them go with that gentle shake which is peculiar to mothers, she exclaimed, "How smart they are!" They sat down by the fire-side, with a doll which they turned over on their knees with all sorts of joyous prattle. At times Cosette raised her eyes from her knitting, and mournfully watched their playing. Eponine and Azelma did not look at Cosette, for to them she was like the dog. These three little girls did not count four-and-twenty years between them, and already represented human society—on one side envy, on the other, disdain. The doll was very old and broken, but it did not appear the less wonderful to Cosette, who never in her life possessed a doll, a "real doll," to employ an expression which all children will

understand. All at once the landlady, who was going about the room, noticed that Cosette was idling, and watching the children instead of working.

"Ah, I have caught you," she exclaimed; "that's the way you work, is it? I'll make you work with the cat-o'-nine-tails."

The stranger, without leaving his chair, turned to Madame Thénardier.

"Oh, madame," he said with an almost timid smile, "let her play."

Such a wish would have been a command from any traveller who had ordered a good supper and drunk a couple of bottles of wine, and who did not look like a beggar. But the landlady did not tolerate a man who had such a hat, having a desire! and one who wore such a coat daring to have a will of his own! Hence she answered sharply,—

"She must work, since she eats; I do not keep her to do nothing."

"What is she doing, pray?" the stranger continued, in that gentle voice which formed such a strange contrast with his beggar clothes and porter shoulders.

The landlady deigned to reply,—

"She is knitting stockings, if you please, for my little girls, who have none, so to speak, and are forced to go about barefooted."

The man looked at Cosette's poor red feet, and said,—

"When will she have finished that pair of stockings?"

"She has three or four good days' work, the idle slut."

"And how much may such a pair be worth when finished?"

The landlady gave him a contemptuous glance.

"At least thirty sous."

"Will you sell them to me for five francs?" the man continued.

"By Job," a carrier who was listening exclaimed, with a coarse laugh, "I should think so,—five balls!"

M. Thénardier thought it his duty to speak.

"Yes, sir, if such be your fancy, you can have the pair of stockings for five francs, we cannot refuse travellers anything."

"Cash payment," the landlady said in her peremptory voice.

"I buy the pair of stockings," the man said, and added, as

he drew a five-franc piece from his pocket and laid it on the table, "I pay for them."

Then he turned to Cosette,—

"Your labour is now mine, so play, my child."

Thénardier came up, and silently put the coin into his pocket. The landlady could make no answer, but she bit her lips, and her face assumed an expression of hatred. Cosette was trembling, but still ventured to ask,—

"Is it true, madame? May I play?"

"Play," her mistress said, in a terrible voice.

And while her lips thanked the landlady, all her little soul thanked the traveller. Thénardier had returned to his glass, and his wife whispered in his ear,—

"What can this yellow man be?"

"I have seen," Thénardier replied, with a sovereign air, "millionaires who wore a coat like his."

Cosette had laid down her needle, but did not dare leave her place, for, as a rule, she moved as little as possible. She took from a box behind her a few old rags and her little leaden sword. Eponine and Azelma paid no attention to what was going on, for they were carrying out a very important operation. They had seized the cat, thrown the doll on the ground, and Eponine, who was the elder, was wrapping up the kitten, in spite of its miaulings and writhings, in a quantity of red and blue rags. While performing this serious and difficult task, she was saying to her sister in the sweet and adorable language of children, the grace of which, like the glistening of butterflies' wings, disappears when you try to fix it,—

"This doll, sister, is more amusing than the other, you see, for it moves, it cries, and is warm; so we will play with it. It is my little daughter, and I am a lady; you will call upon me and look at it. By degrees you will see its whiskers, and that will surprise you, and then you will see its ears and its tail and that will surprise you, too, and you will say to me, 'Oh, my goodness!' and I shall answer, 'Yes, Madame, it is a little child I have like that; little children are so at present.'"

While Eponine and Azelma were wrapping up the kitten, Cosette on her side was performing the same operation on her sword. This done, she laid it on her arm, and sang softly to lull it to sleep. A doll is one of the most imperious wants, and at the same time one of the most delicious instincts, of

feminine childhood. To clean, clothe, adorn, dress, undress, dress again, teach, scold a little, nurse, lull, send to sleep, and imagine that something is somebody—the whole future of a woman is contained in this. A little girl without a doll is nearly as unhappy and quite as impossible as a wife without children; Cosette, therefore, made a doll of her sword. The landlady, in the meanwhile, walked up to the "yellow man." "My husband is right," she thought, "it is perhaps M. Lafitte. Some rich men are so whimsical." She leant her elbow on the table and said, "Sir——"

At the word "Sir" the man turned round, for the female Thénardier had up to the present only addressed him as "My good man."

"You see, sir," she continued, assuming her gentle air, which was still more dreadful to see than her fierce look, "I am glad to see the child play, it is all right for once, as you are generous. But, you see, she has nothing, and must work."

"Then, she is not a child of yours?" the man asked.

"Oh! Lord, no, sir; she is a poor little girl we took in out of charity. She is a sort of imbecile, and I think has water on the brain, for she has a big head. We do all we can for her, but we are not rich, and though we write to her people, we have not had an answer for six months. It looks as if the mother were dead."

"Ah!" said the man, and fell back into his reverie.

"The mother couldn't have been much," the landlady added, "for she deserted her child."

During the whole of the conversation Cosette, as if an instinct warned her that she was being talked about, did not take her eyes off her mistress. She listened and heard two or three indistinct words here and there, while, under her table, she looked at the fire which was reflected in her fixed eyes. She then began rocking her doll again, and while lulling it to sleep sang in a low voice, "My mother is dead, my mother is dead."

All at once Cosette broke off: she turned, and perceived the doll lying on the ground a few paces from the kitchen table. She let the wrapped-up sword, which only half satisfied her, fall, and then slowly looked round the room. The landlady was whispering to her husband, and reckoning some change. Eponine and Azelma were playing with the kitten, the guests

were eating, drinking, or singing, and no one noticed her. She had not a moment to lose, so she crept on her hands and knees from under the table, assured herself once again that she was not watched, and seized the doll. A moment after she was back in her seat, and turned so that the doll which she held in her arms should be in the shadow. The happiness of playing with this doll was almost too much for her. This joy lasted nearly a quarter of an hour, but in spite of the caution which Cosette took, she did not notice that one of the doll's feet was peeping out, and that the fire lit it up very distinctly. This pink luminous foot emerging from the glow suddenly caught the eye of Azelma, who said to Eponine, "Look, sister."

The two little girls were stupefied: Cosette had dared to take their doll! Eponine rose, and without letting the cat go, ran to her mother and plucked the skirt of her dress.

"Let me be," said the mother, "what do you want now?"

"Mother," said the girl, "just look!"

And she pointed to Cosette, who, yielding entirely to the ecstasy of possession, saw and heard nothing more. The landlady's face assumed that peculiar expression, which is composed of the terrible blended with the trifles of life, and which has caused such women to be christened Megæras. This time wounded pride exasperated her wrath. She cried in a voice which indignation rendered hoarse,—"Cosette!"

Cosette started as if the earth had trembled beneath her and turned round. She gently laid the doll on the ground with a species of veneration mingled with despair: then, without taking her eyes off it, she clasped her hands, and, frightful to say of a child of her age, wrung them, and then burst into tears, a thing which none of the emotions of the day had caused. The traveller had risen from his chair. "What is the matter?" he asked the landlady.

"That wretch," the landlady answered, "has had the audacity to touch my children's doll."

The man went straight to the street door opened it, and walked out; the landlady took advantage of his absence to give Cosette a kick under the table, which made her scream. The door opened again, and the man reappeared, carrying in his hands the fabulous doll to which we have alluded, and which all the village children had been contemplating since the morning. He placed it on its legs before Cosette, saying,—

"Here, this is for you."

We must suppose that, during the hour he had been sitting in a reverie, he had confusedly noticed the toyman's shop, which was so brilliantly illumined with lamps and candle, that it could be seen through the tap-room window like an aurora borealis. Cosette raised her eyes: she had looked at the man coming towards her with the doll, as if he were the sun; she heard the extraordinary words, "It is for you;" she looked at him, looked at the doll, then drew back slowly, and concealed herself entirely in a corner under the table. She did not cry, she did not speak, but looked as if she dared hardly breathe. The mother, petrified and dumb, began her conjectures again. "Who is this man? is he poor or a millionaire? He is, perhaps, both, that is to say, a thief." The landlord looked in turn at the doll and the traveller: he seemed to be sniffing round the man, as he would have done round a money-bag. This only lasted for a second; then he went up to his wife and whispered,—

"That machine costs at least thirty francs. No nonsense, crawl in the dust before the man."

"My little Cosette," the landlady said fawningly, "this gentleman gives you the doll, so take it, for it is yours."

Cosette gazed at the wonderful doll with a sort of terror; her face was still bathed in tears, but her eyes were beginning to fill, like the sky at dawn, with strange rays of joy.

"May I, madame?"

"Of course," said her mistress, "since this gentleman gives it to you."

"Is it true, sir?" Cosette continued, "is the lady really mine?"

The stranger's eyes were full of tears, and he seemed to have reached that point of emotion when a man does not speak, in order that he may not weep. He nodded to Cosette, and placed the "lady's" little hand in hers. Cosette quickly drew back her hand as if the lady's burnt her, and looked down at the brick floor. We are compelled to add that at this moment she put her tongue out to an enormous length; all at once she turned and passionately seized the doll.

"I will call her Catherine," she said.

It was a strange sight when Cosette's rags met and held the doll's ribbons and fresh muslins.

"May I put her in a chair, madame?" she continued.

"Yes, my child," her mistress answered.

She placed Catherine in a chair, and then sat down on the ground before her, motionless, without saying a word, and in a contemplative attitude.

This unknown man, who had the air of a visitor sent by Providence to Cosette, was at the moment the person whom Madame Thénardier most hated in the world; still she must put a constraint on herself. This emotion was more than she could endure, accustomed to dissimulation though she was. She hastened to send her children to bed, and then asked the yellow man's leave to send off Cosette, "who had been very tired during the day," she added with a maternal air. Cosette went off to bed carrying Catherine in her arms.

The man rested his elbow on the table, and resumed his thoughtful attitude; the other travellers regarded him from a distance with a sort of respectful fear. Several hours passed, midnight mass was finished, the matin bell had been rung, the drinkers had gone away, the pot-house was closed, the fire was out in the tap-room, but the stranger still remained at the same spot and in the same posture. From time to time he changed the elbow on which he was leaning, that was all; but he had not uttered a syllable since Cosette went off to bed. The Thénardiers alone remained in the room through politeness and curiosity.

"Is he going to pass the night like that?" the landlady pouted. When it struck two, she declared herself conquered, and said to her husband, "I am off to bed; you can do as you like." At length the landlord doffed his cap, walked up gently, and ventured to say,—

"Do you not wish for repose, sir?"

"Why, you are right," said the stranger, "where is your stable?"

"I will show you the way, sir," Thénardier replied with a smile.

He took the candle; the man fetched his stick and bundle, and Thénardier led him to a room on the first floor, which was most luxurious, with its mahogany furniture, and the bed with its red cotton curtains.

"What is this?" the traveller asked.

"Our own wedding bed-room," the landlord replied; "my

wife and I occupy another, and this room is only entered three or four times a year."

"I should have preferred the stable," the man said roughly. Thénardier pretended not to hear this disagreeable reflection, but lit two new wax candles standing on the mantel-piece, and disappeared, without saying good evening, as he did not wish to treat with disrespectful cordiality a man whom he intended to flay royally the next morning. The landlord went to his room, where his wife was in bed, but not asleep. So soon as she heard her husband's footstep, she said to him,—

"You know that I mean to turn Cosette out to-morrow?"

Thénardier coldly answered,—

"How you go on."

When the landlord had withdrawn, the stranger sat down in an easy chair and remained pensive for a time; then he took off his shoes, seized one of the candlesticks, and left the room, looking about him as if in search of something. He went along a passage and reached the staircase; here he heard a very gentle sound, like the breathing of a child. He followed this sound, and reached a triangular closet under the stairs, or, to speak more correctly, formed by the stairs themselves. Here, among old hampers and potsherds, in dust and cobwebs, there was a bed, if we may apply the term to a paillasse so rotten as to show the straw, and a blanket so torn as to show the mattress. There were no sheets, and all this lay on the ground; in this bed Cosette was sleeping. The man walked up and gazed at her; Cosette was fast asleep and full dressed; in winter she did not take off her clothes, that she might be a little warmer. She was holding to her bosom the doll, whose large open eyes glistened in the darkness; from time to time she gave a heavy sigh, as if about to awake, and pressed the doll almost convulsively in her arms. There was nothing by her bed-side but one of her wooden shoes. Through an open door close by a large dark room could be seen, through which the stranger entered. At the end, two little white beds were visible through a glass door, and which belonged to Eponine and Azelma. Behind this a wicker curtainless cradle was half hidden, in which slept the little boy who had been crying all the evening.

The stranger conjectured that this room communicated with that of the Thénardiers. He was about to return when his eye fell on the chimney, one of those vast inn chimneys in

which there is always so little fire when there is a frost, and which are so cold to look at. In this chimney there was no fire, not even ashes; but what there was in it attracted the traveller's attention. He saw two little child's shoes of coquettish shape and unequal size; and the traveller recollected the graceful and immemorial custom of children who place their shoe in the chimney on Christmas night, in order to obtain some glittering present from their good fairy in the darkness. Eponine and Azelma had not failed in this observance. The traveller bent down; the fairy, that is, the mother, had already paid her visit, and in each shoe a handsome ten-sous piece could be seen shining. The man rose and was going away, when he observed another object in the darkest corner of the hearth; he looked at it, and recognized a hideous wooden shoe, half broken and covered with ashes and dried mud. It was Cosette's; with the touching confidence of children who may be disappointed, but are never discouraged she had also placed her shoe in the chimney. Hope in a child that has never known aught but despair, is a sublime and affecting thing. There was nothing in this shoe; but the stranger felt in his pocket and laid a louis d'or in it; then he crept noiselessly back to his bed-room.

The next morning, almost two hours before daybreak, the traveller appeared in the taproom, carrying his stick and bundle.

"Up so soon?" the landlady said, "are you going to leave us already, sir?"

"Yes, madame, I am going; what do I owe you?"

The landlady, without replying, handed him a most exorbitant bill. He opened and looked at it, but his attention was visibly elsewhere.

"Do you do a good business here?" he asked.

"Tolerably well, sir," the landlady answered, stupefied at not seeing any other explosion; then, she went on with an elegiac and lamentable accent,—

"Oh, sir, times are very bad! and then there are so few respectable people in these parts. It is lucky we have now and then generous and rich travellers like yourself, sir, for the expenses are so high. Why, that little girl costs us our eyes out of our head."

"What little girl?"

"Why, you know, Cosette, the Lark, as they call her hereabout."

The man replied, in a voice which he strove to render careless, and in which there was a tremor,—

"And suppose you were freed of her?"

The landlady's red and violent face was illumined by a hideous grin.

"Ah, sir, my good sir, take her, keep her, carry her off, sugar her, stuff her with truffles, eat her, drink her, and may all the Saints in Paradise bless you. You really will take her away at once?"

"At once; call her."

"Cosette," the landlady shouted.

"In the meanwhile," the man continued, "I will pay my score; how much is it?"

He took a glance at the bill, and could not restrain a start of surprise. He looked at the landlady and said, slowly, "Twenty-three francs!"

The stranger laid five five-franc pieces on the table.

"Go and fetch the girl," he said.

At this moment Thénardier walked into the middle of the room, and said,—

"The gentleman owes twenty-six sous."

"Twenty-six sous!" the wife exclaimed.

"Twenty sous for the bed-room," Thénardier continued coldly, "and six for the supper. As for the girl, I must talk a little with the gentleman first. Leave us, wife."

So soon as they were alone, Thénardier offered the traveller a chair; he sat down, Thénardier remained standing and his face assumed a singular expression of kindliness and simplicity.

"I must tell you," he said, "sir, that I adore the child."

The stranger looked at him fixedly.

"What child?"

"Why, our little Cosette! don't you wish to take her from us? Well, I speak frankly, I cannot consent. I should miss the child, for I have known her since she was a baby. She has neither father nor mother, and I brought her up; and I have bread both for her and for me. Look you, I am fond of the child; affection grows on you; and though my wife is quick, she loves her too. She is like our own child, and I want to hear her prattle in the house."

The stranger still looked at him fixedly, as he continued, "Excuse me, sir, but a child can't be given like that to the first passer-by. Supposing that I let her go and sacrificed myself, I should like to know where she is going, and not lose her out of sight; I should wish to go and see her now and then, to convince the child that her foster-father is watching over her. I don't even know your name. I ought at least to see some scrap of paper, a passport, and so on."

The stranger, without ceasing to fix on him that look which pierces to the bottom of the conscience, said in a grave firm voice,

"Monsieur Thénardier, a man does not require a passport to go four leagues from Paris; and if I take Cosette away, I take her away, that is all. You will not know my name, my residence, or where she is, and it is my intention that she shall never see you again. I break the string that she has round her foot, and away she flies; does that suit you? yes or no?"

Thénardier understood that he had to do with a very strong man. On the previous evening, while drinking, smoking, and singing, not a gesture or movement of the yellow-coated man escaped him, and even before the stranger so clearly manifested his interest in Cosette, Thénardier divined it. He surprised the profound glances of this old man which constantly reverted to the child. Why this interest? Who was this man? why was his attire so wretched when his purse was so full? These questions he asked himself, and could not answer them, and they irritated him; he reflected on them the whole night. He could not be Cosette's father; was he her grandfather? Then, why did he not make himself known at once? When a man has a claim, he proves it, and this man evidently had no claim on Cosette. Thénardier was one of those men who judge of a situation at a glance, and considered that it was the moment to advance straight and rapidly. He behaved like great captains at that decisive instant which they alone can recognize, and suddenly unmasked his battery.

"Sir," he said, "I want one thousand five hundred francs."

The stranger drew from his side-pocket an old black leathern portfolio, and took from it three bank notes which he

laid on the table; then he placed his large thumb on the notes, and said to the landlord,—

"Bring Cosette here."

While this was taking place, what was Cosette about? On waking, she ran to her sabot and found the gold coin in it. Cosette was dazzled, she knew not what a gold piece was, she had never seen one, and she hurriedly hid it in her pocket, as if she had stolen it. She felt it was really hers, she guessed whence the gift came, but she experienced a feeling of joy full of fear. These magnificent things did not seem to her real,— the doll frightened her, the gold coin frightened her, and she trembled vaguely at this magnificence. The stranger alone did not frighten her; on the contrary, he reassured her since the previous evening. Cosette no longer felt afraid of her mistress, for she was no longer alone; she had some one by her side. She had set about her daily work very quickly, and the louis, which she had in the same pocket from which the fifteen-sous piece fell on the previous night, caused her thoughts to stray. It was during one of these contemplations that her mistress came to her; by her husband's order she had come to fetch the child, and extraordinary to say, did not strike her, or even abuse her.

"Cosette," she said, almost gently, "come directly."

A moment after, Cosette entered the tap-room. The stranger took his bundle and untied it; it contained a complete mourning dress for a child of seven years of age.

"My dear," the man said, "take these and go and dress yourself quickly."

Day was breaking, when those inhabitants of Montfermeil who were beginning to open their doors saw a poorly-clad man and a girl, holding a large doll, going along the Paris road toward Livry. No one knew the man, and few recognized Cosette in her new dress. Cosette was going away. With whom? where to? she did not know. All she understood was that she was leaving Thénardier's pot-house behind her; no one thought of saying good-bye to her, or she to any one. Poor gentle being, whose heart up to this hour had only been compressed!

Madame Thénardier, according to her habit, had left her husband to act, and anticipated grand results. When the man and Cosette had left, Thénardier let a good quarter of

an hour elapse, then took her on one side, and showed her the fifteen hundred francs.

"Is that all?" she said.

It was the first time since her marriage that she ventured to criticize an act of her master, and the blow went home.

"You are right," he said, "and I am an ass. Give me my hat." He thrust the three notes into his pocket and went out, but he made a mistake and first turned to the right. Some neighbours of whom he inquired put him on the right track, and he walked along at a great rate, and soliloquizing.

"The man is evidently a millionaire dressed in yellow, and I am an animal. He gave first twenty sous, then five francs, then fifty francs, then fifteen hundred francs, and all with the same facility. He would have given fifteen thousand francs! but I shall catch him up." And, then, the bundle of clothes prepared beforehand was singular, and there was a mystery behind it. Now mysteries must not be let go when you hold them, for the secrets of the rich are sponges full of gold, if you know how to squeeze them. All these thoughts whirled about his brain. "I am an animal," he said. On leaving Montfermeil and reaching the angle formed by the Lagny road, you can see it running for a long distance before you upon the plateau. On getting to this point he calculated that he should see the man and child, and looked as far as he could, but saw nothing. He inquired again, and passers-by told him that the people he was looking for had gone in the direction of Gagny wood. He followed them, for, though they had the start of him, a child walks slowly.

In fact, when he had passed the ponds and cut across the wide turfed glade which covers the old water way of the Abbey de Chelles, he noticed under a shrub a hat, on which he built up many conjectures. The shrub was low, and Thénardier saw that the man and Cosette were sitting under it. The man had sat down there to let the child rest a little, and the tavern-keeper dodged round the shrub and suddenly appeared before those whom he was seeking.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, panting, "but here are your fifteen hundred francs."

The man raised his eyes.

"What is the meaning of this?"

Thénardier answered respectfully,—

" It means, sir, that I am going to take Cosette back."

The child started, and clung to the man: the latter answered, looking fixedly at Thénardier, and leaving a space between each word,—

" You—take—Cosette—back ? "

" Yes, sir, I do: and I must tell you that I have reflected. The truth is, that I have no right to give her to you. Look you, I am an honest man: the little one does not belong to me, but to her mother, who intrusted her to me, and I can only give her back to her mother. You will say to me, ' Her mother is dead.' Good. In that case, I can only surrender Cosette to a person who brings me a written authority from her mother. That is clear enough."

The man, without answering, felt in his pocket, and Thénardier saw the portfolio with the bank-notes reappear. He gave a start of joy.

" Good," he thought, " I have him, he is going to bribe me."

Before opening the portfolio the traveller looked around him; the place was utterly deserted, and there was not a soul in the wood or the valley. The man opened the pocket-book and took out, not the handful of bank-notes which Thénardier anticipated, but a simple sheet of paper, which he opened and handed to the landlord, saying,—" You are right: read."

Thénardier took the paper and read.

" M. sur M., March 25, 1823.

" Monsieur Thénardier,—You will hand over Cosette to the bearer, who will pay up all little matters. Yours, Fantine."

" Do you know the signature ? " the man continued.

It was really Fantine's, and Thénardier recognized it, and had no reply. The man added,

" You can keep that paper as your discharge."

Thénardier folded it up neatly, and growled,—" The signature is tolerably well imitated. Well, be it so, but the expenses must be paid, and there is a heavy sum owing me."

The man rose, and said as he dusted his threadbare cuff, —" Monsieur Thénardier, in January the mother calculated that she owed you 120 francs; in February you sent in an

account of 500 francs; you received 300 at the end of that month, and 300 more early in March. Since then nine months have elapsed at the agreed on price of 15 francs, which makes 135 francs. You had received 100 francs too much, so this leaves 35 francs owing you, and I have just given you 1500."

Thénardier felt just like the wolf when it is caught by the leg in a steel trap.

He behaved like the wolf: he shook himself: impudence had carried him through before now.

"Monsieur I don't know your name," he said boldly, and putting off his respectful manner, "if you do not give me 3000 francs I shall take Cosette back."

The stranger said quietly, "Come, Cosette." He took the child by his left hand, and with the right picked up his stick. Thénardier noticed the enormity of the stick and the solitude of the spot; the man buried himself in the wood, leaving the landlord motionless and confounded. As he walked away Thénardier regarded his broad shoulders and enormous fists, then his eye fell on his own thin arms. "I must have been a fool," he said, "not to bring my gun, as I was going to the chase."

Still the tavern-keeper did not give in. "I will know where he goes," he said, and began following them at a distance. The man led Cosette in the direction of Bondy: he walked slowly, with drooping head and in a pensive attitude. From time to time he turned round and looked to see whether he were followed, and suddenly perceived Thénardier. He drew Cosette into a clump of trees, in which they both disappeared. The closeness of the trees compelled Thénardier to draw nearer to them, and when the man was at the thickest part he turned round and saw Thénardier, although the latter tried to conceal himself behind a stem. The man gave him a restless glance, then tossed his head and continued his walk. Thénardier followed him, but, after going some two hundred yards, the man turned and looked at him so menacingly that the landlord thought it "useless" to go any further, and turned back.

At nightfall Jean Valjean re-entered Paris, and got into a cabriolet which conveyed him to the Esplanade of the Observatory. Here he got down, and the pair proceeded in the darkness toward the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. The day had been strange and full of emotions for Cosette: she felt tired,

and Jean Valjean perceived it by her hand, which dragged more and more. He took her on his back, and Cosette, without letting loose of Catherine, laid her head on his shoulder and fell asleep.

Forty years ago the solitary walker who ventured into the lost districts of the Salpetrière, and went up the Boulevard as far as the Barrière d'Italie, reached a quarter where it might be said that Paris disappeared. It was indeed a boulevard of the great city, but more ferocious at night than a forest, more gloomy by day than a cemetery. It was the old quarter of the Marché-aux-Chevaux. The rambler, if he risked himself beyond the tottering walls of the market, if he even consented to pass the Rue du Petit-banquier, reached the corner of the Rue des Vignes St. Marcel, a but little known latitude, after leaving on his right a garden protected by high walls, next a field in which stood tan mills, resembling gigantic beaver dams, next an enclosure encumbered with planks, tree-stumps, sawdust, and chips, on the top of which a large dog barked; then a long low wall, all in ruins, with a small, decrepit building, on which could be read in large letters STICK NO BILLS. Here, close to a foundry, and between two garden walls, could be seen, at the time of which we write, a poor house, which, at the first glance, seemed small as a cottage, but was in reality large as a cathedral. It turned its gable end to the public thoroughfare, and hence came its apparent smallness; nearly the whole house was concealed, and only a door and a window could be perceived.

This house was only one storey high. On examining it, the first fact that struck you was that the door could never have been other than that of a low lodging-house, while the window, had it been carved in stone instead of made of stucco, might have belonged to a mansion. The door was nothing but a collection of worm-eaten planks, clumsily held together by roughly-planed cross beams. It opened immediately on a steep staircase, muddy, dirty, and dusty, of the same width as itself, which could be seen from the street mounting steep as a ladder, and disappearing in the gloom between two walls. The top of the clumsy opening in which the door stood was masked by a thin deal plank, in which a triangular hole had been cut. On the inside of the door a brush dipped in ink had clumsily traced No. 52, while over

the skylight the same brush had painted No. 50, so people hesitated. Dust-coloured rags hung like a drapery over the triangular skylight. The window was wide, tolerably lofty, filled with large panes of glass, and protected by Venetian shutters; but these panes had various wounds, at once concealed and betrayed by an ingenious bandage of paper, and the Venetian shutters, broken and hanging from their hinges, threatened passers-by more than they protected the inhabitants. The horizontal screen-boards were wanting here and there, and these places had been filled up with boards nailed on perpendicularly; so that the affair began by being a Venetian screen, and ended by being a shutter. This door, which had an unclean look, and this window, which looked honest, though fallen in the world, produced the effect of two beggars walking side by side with two different faces under the same rags, the one having always been a mendicant, while the other had once been a gentleman. The staircase led to a very large building, which resembled a shed that had been converted into a house. This building had, as its intestinal tube, a long passage, upon which opened, right and left, compartments of various dimensions, habitable at a pinch, and more like booths than cells. A portion of this building has been recently demolished, but what still remains will allow an idea to be formed of what it was. The whole affair is not more than a century old; one hundred years are the youth of a church and the old age of a human abode. The postman called this house No. 50–52, but it was known in the quarter by the name of Maison Gorbeau.

Jean Valjean stopped before No. 50–52. He felt in his pocket, took out a latch-key, opened and carefully shut the door again, and went up-stairs, still carrying Cosette on his back. When he reached the landing he took from his pocket a key, with which he opened another door. The room he entered was a sort of spacious garret, furnished with a mattress laid on the ground, a table, and a few chairs. There was a burning stove in the corner, and the boulevard lamp faintly illumined this poor interior. At the end of the room was a closet with a poor bedstead, to which Jean Valjean carried the child and laid her on it, without awaking her. He struck a light and lit a candle,—all this had been prepared on the previous day,—and he then began gazing at

Cosette with a look full of ecstasy, in which the expression of kindness and tenderness almost attained delirium. The little girl, with that calm confidence which only appertains to extreme strength and extreme weakness, had fallen asleep without knowing with whom she was, and continued to sleep without knowing where she was. Jean Valjean bent down and kissed the child's hand. Nine months previously he had kissed her mother's hand, who had also just fallen asleep, and the same painful, religious, poignant feeling filled his heart. He knelt down by the side of Cosette's bed.

Long after daybreak the child was still asleep. A pale beam of the December sun filtered through the window and made large strips of light and shadow on the ceiling. Suddenly a heavily-laden wagon, passing along the boulevard, shook the house like a blast of wind, and made it tremble from top to bottom.

"Yes, madame," Cosette cried, waking with a start, "I am coming directly."

And she jumped out of bed her eyelids still half closed by the weight of sleep, and stretched out her arms to a corner of the wall.

"Oh, goodness, my broom!" she said.

She opened her eyes thoroughly, and saw Jean Valjean's smiling face.

"Ah, it is true," the child said. "Good morning, sir."

Children accept at once and familiarly joy and happiness, for they are themselves by nature happiness and joy. Cosette saw Catherine at the foot of her bed, caught her up, and while playing, asked Jean Valjean a hundred questions:—"Where was she? was Paris large? was Madame Thénardier a long way off? and would she never return?" etc. etc. etc. All at once she exclaimed, "How pretty it is here!"

It was a frightful hole, but she felt herself free.

"Must I sweep?" she at length continued.

"Play," said Jean Valjean.

The day passed in this way, and Cosette, not feeling any anxiety at understanding nothing, was inexpressibly happy between her doll and this good man.

CHAPTER IX

JEAN VALJEAN had selected his asylum well. The room he occupied with Cosette was one whose window looked out on the boulevard, and as it was the only one of the sort in the house, he had not to fear the curiosity of neighbours, either in front or on his side. The ground-floor of 50–52, a sort of rickety pentice, was employed as a tool-house by nursery-gardeners, and had no communication with the first floor. The latter, as we have said, contained several rooms, and a few garrets, one of which alone was occupied by the old woman who looked after Jean Valjean. It was this old woman who was known as the chief lodger, and who in reality performed the duties of porter, that let him the room on Christmas day. He had represented himself as an annuitant ruined by the Spanish bonds, who meant to live there with his little daughter. He paid six months' rent in advance, and requested the old woman to furnish the room in the way we have seen, and it was this woman who lit the stove and prepared everything on the evening of their arrival.

Weeks passed away, and these two beings led a happy life in this wretched garret. Teaching Cosette to read, and letting her play, almost constituted Jean Valjean's entire life ; and then, he spoke to her about her mother, and made her play. She called him "father," and knew him by no other name. He spent hours in watching her dress and undress her doll, and listening to her prattle. From this moment life appeared to him full of interest. He saw a future illumined by Cosette, as by a delicious light ; and as the best men are not exempt from a selfish thought, he said to himself at times joyfully that she would be ugly.

Jean Valjean was so prudent as never to go out by day ; every evening he walked out for an hour or two, sometimes alone, but generally with Cosette, in the most retired streets, and entering the churches at night-fall. He walked along holding her by the hand, and talking pleasantly with her, for Cosette's temper turned to be extremely gay.

The old woman cleaned, cooked, and bought food for them ; they lived quietly, always having a little fire, but as if they were very poor. He still wore his yellow coat, black breeches, an old hat, and in the streets he was taken for a poor man

It happened at times that charitable women turned and gave him a sou, which Jean Valjean accepted with a deep bow. It happened at times also that he met some wretch asking for charity; in such a case he looked behind him to see that no one was watching, furtively approached the beggar, gave him money, now and then silver, and hurried away. This entailed inconveniences, for people began to know him in the district under the name of the alms-giving beggar. The old chief lodger, a spiteful creature, full of envy and uncharitableness toward her neighbours, watched him closely, though he did not suspect it. One day this spy saw Jean Valjean go into one of the uninhabited rooms in a way that seemed to her peculiar. She followed him with the stealthy step of an old cat, and was able to watch him, herself unseen, through the crack of the door, to which Jean Valjean turned his back, doubtless as a greater precaution. She saw him take out of his pocket a pair of scissors, needle, and thread, and then begin ripping up the lining of his coat, and pull out a piece of yellow paper, which he unfolded. The old woman recognized with horror that it was a thousand franc note, the second or third she had seen in her life, and she fled in terror. A moment after Jean Valjean addressed her, and requested her to change the note for him, adding that it was his half-year's dividend, which he had received on the previous day. "When?" the old woman thought; "he did not go out till six in the evening, and the Bank is certainly not open at that hour." The old woman went to change the note and made her conjectures; the amount of money being considerably multiplied afforded a grand topic of conversation for the gossips of the neighbourhood.

A few days after it happened that Jean Valjean, in his shirt sleeves, was chopping wood in the passage, and the old woman was in his room cleaning up. She was alone, for Cosette was admiring the wood-chopping. She saw the coat hanging on a nail, and investigated it. The lining had been sewn up again, but the good woman felt it carefully, and fancied she could notice folds of paper between the cloth and the lining. More bank notes, of course! She also noticed that there were all sorts of things in the pockets; not only the needles, scissors, and thread she had seen, but a large portfolio, a big clasp knife, and, most suspicious fact of all,

several different-coloured wigs. Each pocket of this coat seemed to be a species of safeguard against unexpected events.

The inhabitants of the house thus reached the last days of winter.

There was near S. Medard's church a poor man who usually sat on the edge of a condemned well, to whom Jean Valjean liked to give alms. The persons who envied this beggar said that he belonged to the police, and he was an ex-beadle seventy-five years of age, who was constantly telling his beads. One evening Jean Valjean went up to him and placed his usual charity in his hand, and the beggar suddenly raised his eyes, looked fixedly at Jean Valjean, and then let his head hang again. This movement was like a flash, but Jean Valjean gave a start; he fancied that he had seen by the flickering light of the lamp, not the placid and devout face of the old beadle, but a terrifying and familiar face. He recoiled, terrified and petrified, not daring to breathe, staring at the beggar, who had let his head fall, and did not appear to know that he was there. At this strange moment, an instinct, perhaps that of self-preservation, urged Valjean not to utter a syllable. The beggar was of the same height, wore the same rags, and looked as he did every day. "Stuff," said Valjean, "I am mad, dreaming; it is impossible!" And he went home sorely troubled in mind. He hardly dared confess to himself that the face which he fancied he had seen was Javert's. At night, on reflecting, he regretted that he had not spoken to the man, and made him raise his head a second time. The next evening he returned and found the beggar at his seat. "Good day, my man," Jean Valjean said resolutely, as he gave him a sou. The beggar raised his head and replied in a complaining voice, "Thank you, my good gentleman." It was certainly the old beadle. Jean Valjean felt fully reassured, and began laughing. "How on earth could I have thought that it was Javert? why, am I now to grow wool gathering?" and he thought no more of it.

A few days later, at about eight in the evening, he was giving Cosette a spelling lesson, when he heard the house door open and then close again. This appeared to him singular, for the old woman, who alone lived in the house beside himself, always went to bed at nightfall to save candle. Jean Valjean made Cosette a sign to be silent, for he heard some

one coming up stairs. The footstep was heavy and sounded like a man's, but the old woman wore thick shoes, and nothing so closely resembles a man's footstep as an old woman's. After a long interval, hearing nothing more, he turned noiselessly, and, on looking at his door, saw a light through the key-hole, which formed a sort of a sinister star in the blackness of the door and the wall. There was evidently some one there, holding a candle in his hand and listening. A few minutes passed, and then the light went away; still he did not hear the sound of footsteps, which seemed to indicate that the man who came to listen had taken off his shoes. Jean Valjean threw himself full-dressed on his bed, and could not close his eyes all night. At day-break, when he was just yielding with fatigue, he was aroused by the creaking of a door which opened into a room at the end of the passage, and then heard the same footstep which had ascended the stairs the previous evening drawing nearer. He put his eye to the key-hole, which was rather large, in the hope of seeing the man who had listened at his door over night. It was really a man, who this time passed Jean Valjean's door without stopping. The passage was still too dark for him to distinguish his face; but when the man reached the stair-case a ray of light from outside fell upon him, and Jean Valjean saw his back perfectly. He was a tall man, dressed in a long coat, with a cudgel under his arm; and he was very like Javert. Valjean might have tried to see him on the boulevard through his window, but for that purpose he must have opened it, and that he dared not do. It was plain that this man came in with a key and was quite at home. Who gave him this key? what did it mean? At seven o'clock, when the old woman came to clean up, Jean Valjean gave her a piercing glance, but did not question her. The good woman was as calm as usual, and while sweeping she said to him,

"I suppose you heard some one come in last night, sir?"

At that age, and on that boulevard, eight in the evening is the blackest night.

"Yes, I remember," he said, with the most natural accent: "who was it?"

"A new lodger in the house."

"What is his name?"

"I forget: Dumont or Daumont, something like that."

"And what may he be?"

The old woman looked at him with her little ferret eyes, and answered,—

"He lives on his property, like yourself."

Perhaps she meant nothing, but Jean Valjean fancied that he could detect a meaning. When the old woman had gone off he made a rouleau of some hundred francs which he had in a chest of drawers and put it in his pocket. Whatever precautions he took to keep the money from rattling, a five-franc piece fell from his hand and rolled noisily on the floor.

At nightfall he went down and looked attentively all along the boulevard: he saw nobody, and it seemed utterly deserted. It is true that some one might have been concealed behind the trees. He went up again, and said to Cosette, "Come!" He took her hand, and both left the house together.

Jean Valjean at once left the boulevard and entered the streets, making as many turnings as he could, and at times retracing his steps, to make sure that he was not followed. This manœuvre is peculiar to the tracked deer, and on ground where traces are left it possesses the advantage of deceiving huntsmen and dogs; in venery it is called a "false reimbushment." The moon was at its full, and Jean Valjean was not sorry for it, for as the luminary was still close to the horizon it formed large patches of light and shade in the streets. Valjean was able to slip along the houses and walls on the dark side and watch the bright side; perhaps he did not reflect sufficiently that the dark side escaped his notice. Cosette walked on without asking questions; she felt in safety, as she was with him. He was resolved not to return to No. 50 52, and, like the animal driven from its lair, he sought a hole in which to hide himself until he could find a lodging. Jean Valjean described several labyrinths in the Quartier Mouffetard, which was as fast asleep as if it were still under mediæval discipline and the yoke of the Curfew, and combined several streets into a clever strategic system. There were lodging-houses where he now was, but he did not enter them, as he did not find anything to suit him, and he did not suppose for a moment that if persons were on his trail they had lost it again.

As the clock of St. Etienne du Mont struck eleven he passed the police office at No. 14, in the Rue de Pontoise. A few

minutes after, the instinct to which we have referred made him look round, and he distinctly saw, by the office lamp which betrayed them, three men, who were following him rather closely, pass in turn under the lamp on the dark side of the street. One of these men turned into the office, and another, who was in front, appeared to him decidedly suspicious.

He made a circuit, and eventually turned into the Rue des Postes. There is an open space here, where the Rollin College now stands, and into which the Rue Neuve St. Geneviève runs.

We need hardly say that the Rue Neuve St. Geneviève is an old street, and that a post-chaise does not pass along the Rue des Postes once in ten years.

The moon threw a bright light upon this open space, and Jean Valjean hid himself in a doorway, calculating that if the men were still following him he could not fail to have a good look at them as they crossed the open space. In fact, three minutes had not elapsed when the men appeared. There were now four of them, all tall, dressed in long brown coats and round hats, and holding large sticks in their hands. They stopped in the centre of the square, and formed a group as if consulting, and apparently undecided. The leader turned and pointed with his right hand in the direction Jean Valjean had taken, while another seemed to be pointing with some degree of obstinacy in the opposite direction. At the moment when the first man turned the moon lit up his face brilliantly, and Jean Valjean recognized Javert perfectly.

Uncertainty ceased for Jean Valjean; but fortunately it still lasted with the men. He took advantage of their hesitation, for it was time lost by them and gained by him. He left the gateway in which he was concealed, and pushed on along the Rue des Postes toward the region of the Jardin des Plantes. As Cosette was beginning to feel tired, he took her in his arms and carried her. No one was passing, and the lamps had not been lit on account of the moon.

He reached the Austerlitz Bridge, where a toll still existed at the time, and he handed the tollman a sou.

"It is two sous," said the man; "you are carrying a child who can walk, so you must pay for two."

He paid, though greatly vexed that his passing had given rise to any remark. A heavy wain was passing the river at the same time as himself, and also proceeding to the right bank.

This was useful for him, as he could cross the whole of the bridge in its shadow. On reaching the arches of the bridge, Cosette, whose feet were numbed, asked to be put down; he did so, and took her by the hand again. After crossing the bridge, he saw a little to his right building-yards, towards which he proceeded. In order to reach them he must cross an open brilliantly-lighted space, but he did not hesitate. His pursuers were evidently thrown out, and Jean Valjean believed himself out of danger; he might be looked for, but he was not followed. A little street, the Rue du Chemin Vert Saint Antoine, ran between two timber-yards; it was narrow, dark, and seemed expressly made for him, but before entering it he looked back. From the spot where he was he could see the whole length of the Bridge of Austerlitz; four shadows had just come upon it, and were walking toward the right bank. Jean Valjean gave a start like a recaptured animal; one hope was left him; it was that the four men had not been upon the bridge at the moment when he crossed the large illumined space with Cosette. In that case, by entering the little street before him, he might escape, if he could reach the timber-yards, kitchen-gardens, fields, and land not yet built on. He fancied that he could trust to this little silent street, and entered it.

After going three hundred yards he came to a spot where the road formed two forks, and Jean Valjean had before him, as it were, the two branches of a Y. Which should he choose? He did not hesitate, but took the right one, because the other ran towards the faubourg, that is to say, inhabited parts, while the right branch went in the direction of the country, or deserted parts. Still they did not walk very rapidly, for Cosette checked Jean Valjean's pace, and hence he began carrying her again, and Cosette laid her head on his shoulder and did not say a word. At times he looked back, while careful to keep on the dark side of the street. The first twice or thrice that he turned he saw nothing, the silence was profound, and he continued his walk with a little more confidence. All at once, on turning suddenly, he fancied that he saw something moving on the dark part of the street which he had just passed. He rushed forward rather than walked, hoping to find some side lane by which he could escape, and once again break his trail. He reached a wall, which, however, did not render further

progress impossible, for it was a wall skirting a cross lane, into which the street Jean Valjean had entered ran. Here he must make his mind up again whether to turn to the right or left. He looked to the right; the lane ran for some distance between buildings which were barns or sheds, and then stopped. The end of the blind alley, a tall white wall, was distinctly visible. He looked to the left; on this side the lane was open, and at a distance of about two hundred yards fell into a street, of which it was an affluent. On that side safety lay. At the moment when Jean Valjean turned to his left in order to reach this street he saw at the angle formed by the street and the lane a species of black and motionless statue; it was evidently a man posted there to prevent him passing. Jean Valjean fell back.

Half a century back, in that popular language all made up of traditions which insists on calling the Institute "les Quatre Nations," and the Opera Comique "Feydeau," the precise spot where Jean Valjean now stood was called "le Petit Picpus." Little Picpus, which by the way scarce existed, and was never more than the outline of a quarter, had almost the monastic look of a Spanish town. The streets were scarce paved, and hardly any houses lined them; excepting two or three streets, to which we are about to refer, all was wall and solitude. There was not a shop or a vehicle, scarce a candle lighted in the windows, and every light was put out by ten o'clock. The quarter consisted of gardens, convents, timber-yards, and kitchen-grounds, and there were a few low houses with walls as lofty as themselves. Such was the quarter in the last century. Thirty years ago this quarter was disappearing under the erasure of new buildings, and now it is entirely obliterated.

Little Picpus had what we have just called a Y of streets formed by the Rue du Chemin Vert St. Antoine dividing into two branches, the left-hand one taking the name of the Petite Rue Picpus, and the right-hand that of Rue Polonceau. The two branches of the Y were joined at their summit by a sort of cross bar called Rue Droit-mur. Any one who, coming from the Seine, reached the end of Rue Polonceau, had on his left Rue Droit-mur, turning sharply at a right angle, in front of him the wall of that street, and on his right a truncated prolongation of the Rue Droit-mur called the Cul-de-sac Genrot.

It was here that Jean Valjean was; as we said, on perceiv-

ing the black shadow, standing on watch at the corner of the Rue Droit-mur and the Petite Rue Picpus, he fell back, for he was doubtless watched by this phantom. What was to be done? He had no time to retrograde, for what he had seen moving in the shadow for a few moments previously in his rear was of course Javert and his squad. Javert was probably already at the beginning of the street at the end of which Jean Valjean was, and had doubtless sent one of his men to guard the outlet. He examined the blind alley, that was barred; he examined the Rue Picpus, a sentry was there. To advance was falling into this man's clutches; to fall back was throwing himself into Javert's arms. Jean Valjean felt himself caught in a net which was being slowly hauled in, and looked up to heaven in despair.

In order to understand the following the reader must form an exact idea of the Droit-mur lane, and in particular of the angle which the visitor left on his left when he turned out of the Rue Polonceau into this lane. The lane was almost entirely bordered on the right by poor-looking houses, on the left by single slim-looking edifices, composed of several *corps de logis*, which gradually rose from one floor to two as they approached Little Rue Picpus, so that this mansion, which was very lofty on that side, was very low on the side of Rue Polonceau, where, at the corner to which we have alluded, it sank so low as to be only a wall. This wall did not run parallel with the lane, but formed a very deep cant, concealed by its corners from any observers in Rue Polonceau and Rue Droit-mur. From this cant the wall extended along Rue Polonceau up to a house bearing the No. 49, and in Rue Droit-mur, where it was much shorter, up to the frowning building to which we have referred, whose gable it intersected, thus forming a new re-entering angle in the street. This gable had a gloomy appearance, for only one window was visible, or, to speak more correctly, two shutters covered with sheet zinc and always closed. The description of the locality which we are now giving is strictly correct, and will doubtless arouse a very precise souvenir in the mind of the old inhabitants of the quarter.

The cant in the wall was entirely occupied by a thing that resembled a colossal and wretched gateway; it was a vast collection of perpendicular planks, the top ones wider than those below, and fastened together by long strips of iron. By

the side of this gate was a porte cochère of ordinary dimensions, which had apparently been made in the wall about fifty years previously. A linden tree displayed its branches above the cant, and the wall was covered with ivy on the side of the Rue Polonceau.

In Jean Valjean's desperate situation this gloomy building had an uninhabited and solitary look about it which tempted him. He hurriedly examined it, and said to himself that if he could only enter it he might perhaps be saved. In the centre of the frontage of this building, turned to the Rue Droit-mur, there was a ramification of old leaden drain-pipes communicating with all the windows of the different floors. He put Cosette down, bidding her be silent, and hurried to the spot where the main pipe reached the ground. Perhaps there might be a way to scale it and enter the house, but the pipe was worn out, and scarce held in its cramps; besides, all the windows of this silent house were defended by thick iron bars, even the garrets. And then the moon shone full on this front, and the man watching at the end of the street would see Jean Valjean climb up; and then what was he to do with Cosette? how was he to hoist her up a three-storeyed house? He gave up all idea of climbing by the pipe, and crawled along the wall to re-enter Rue Polonceau. When he reached the cant where he had left Cosette he noticed that no one could see him there. As we stated, he was safe from all eyes, no matter on what side; moreover, he was in the shadow, and then, lastly, there were two gates, which might perhaps be forced. The wall over which he saw the linden tree and the ivy evidently belonged to a garden in which he could at least conceal himself, though there was no foliage on the trees, and pass the rest of the night. Time was slipping away, and he must set to work at once. He felt the porte cochère, and at once perceived that it was fastened up inside and out; and then went to the other great gate with more hope. It was frightfully decrepit, its very size rendered it less solid, the planks were rotten, and the iron bands, of which there were only three, were rusty. It seemed possible to break through this affair. On examining this gate however he saw that it was not a gate; it had no hinges, lock, or partition in the centre; the iron bands crossed it from side to side without any solution of continuity. Through the cracks of the planks he caught a glimpse of coarsely-

mortared rag stone, which passers-by might have seen ten years back. He was forced to confess to himself with consternation that this fancied gate was simply a make-believe; it was easy to pull down a plank, but he would find himself face to face with a wall.

At this moment a hollow, cadenced sound began to grow audible a short distance off, and Jean Valjean ventured to take a peep round the corner of the street. Seven or eight soldiers were entering the street; he could see their bayonets gleaming, and they were coming toward him. These soldiers, at the head of whom he distinguished Javert's tall form, advanced slowly and cautiously, exploring all the corners and all the doors and lanes. Judging from the pace at which they marched, and the halts they made, they would require about a quarter of an hour to reach the spot where Jean Valjean was.

There was now only one thing possible. Among other resources, owing to his numerous escapes from the Toulon galleys, he had become a perfect master in the incredible art of raising himself without ladder, cramping irons, and by his mere muscular strength, and holding on by his shoulders and knees, in the right angle of a wall, to the sixth floor if necessary. Jean Valjean measured the height of the wall above which he saw the linden tree, and found that it was about eighteen feet. The lower part of the angle which it made with the gable end of the large building was filled up with a triangular mass of masonry, very common in Parisian corners. This mass was about five feet high, and the space to be cleared from the top of it was not more than fourteen; but the difficulty was Cosette, a man requires his whole strength to carry out such an ascent, and the slightest burden would displace his centre of gravity and hurl him down. He required a rope, but he had none. Assuredly at this moment, if Jean Valjean had possessed a kingdom, he would have given it for a rope. His desperate glance fell on the lamp-post in the blind alley. In those days lamps were lit at regular distances, which were pulled up and down by a rope that crossed the street, and fitted into a groove in a post. The end of the rope was kept in an iron box under the lantern, of which the lamp-lighter had the key, and the rope itself was protected by a metal case. Jean Valjean leaped across the street, burst the lock of the box with the point of his knife, and a moment later was again by Cosette's side holding a rope.

We have mentioned that the lamps were not lit on this night, the one in the blind alley therefore was naturally extinguished, and any one might have passed close without noticing that it was no longer in its place.

The hour, the place, the darkness, Jean Valjean's preoccupation, his singular gestures, his coming and going, were all beginning to alarm Cosette. The noise of the approaching patrol also constantly became more distinct.

"Father," she whispered, "I am frightened; who is coming?"

"Silence," the unhappy man replied, "it is Madame Thénardier."

The child trembled, and he added,—

"Do not say a word, but leave me to act: if you cry out or sob, she will catch you and take you back again."

Then, without hurry, he undid his cravat, fastened it under Cosette's armpits, fastened the rope to the cravat, took the other end in his teeth, took off his shoes and stockings, which he threw over the wall, and began raising himself in the corner of the wall with as much certainty as if he had cramping irons under his heels and elbows. Half a minute had not elapsed ere he was astride the coping. Cosette looked at him in stupor, without saying a word; for Jean Valjean's mention of the landlady's name had frozen her. All at once she heard Jean Valjean say to her, in a very low voice,—

"Lean against the wall; you must not say a word, or feel frightened."

And she felt herself lifted from the ground, but before she had time to look round she found herself on the top of the wall. Jean Valjean placed her on his back, took her two little hands in his left hand, and crawled along the wall till he reached the cant. As he had suspected, there was a building here, whose roof began at the top of the bastard gate and descended in a gentle slope nearly to the ground, grazing the linden tree. This was a fortunate circumstance, for the wall was much higher on this side than on that of the street, and Jean Valjean could scarce see the ground, so far was it beneath him. He had just reached the sloping roof, and had not yet loosed his hold of the coping, when a violent uproar announced the arrival of the patrol, and he heard Javert's thundering voice,—

"Search the blind alley; all the streets are guarded, and I will wager that he is in it."

The soldiers rushed forward. Jean Valjean slipped down the roof, still supporting Cosette, reached the linden tree, and leapt on the ground. Either through terror or courage the child had not said a word; her hands were only slightly grazed.

Jean Valjean found himself in a large garden of an oblong shape, with a walk of tall poplars at the end, tall shrubs in the corner, and an unshadowed space, in the centre of which an isolated tree could be distinguished.

Jean Valjean had by his side the building, by help of whose roof he had descended, a pile of faggots, and behind the latter, close to the wall, a stone statue, whose mutilated face was merely a shapeless mask, appearing indistinctly in the darkness. The building was a species of ruin, containing several dismantled rooms, of which one was apparently employed as a shed. The large edifice of the Rue Droit-mur had two façades looking into this garden at right angles, and these façades were even more melancholy than those outside. All the windows were barred, and not a single light could be seen, while at the upper window there were scuttles as in prisons. One of these frontages threw its shadow upon the other, which fell back on the garden like an immense black cloth. No other house could be noticed, and the end of the garden was lost in mist and night. Still, walls could be indistinctly noticed intersecting each other, as if there were other gardens beyond, and the low roofs in the Rue Polonceau.

Jean Valjean's first care was to put on his shoes and stockings again, and then enter the shed with Cosette. Cosette trembled and clung close to him: for she could hear the tumultuous noise of the patrol searching the street and lane, the blows of musket-butts against the stones, Javert's appeals to the men whom he had posted, and his oaths, mingled with words which could not be distinguished. At the expiration of a quarter of an hour this species of stormy grumbling appeared to be retiring, and Jean Valjean could scarce breathe. All at once, in the midst of the calm that followed, a new sound burst forth; a heavenly, ineffable sound, as ravishing as the other had been horrible. It was a hymn, that issued from the darkness, a dazzling blending of prayer and harmony in the dark and fearful silence of the night: female voices, but composed at once of the pure accent of virgins and the simple voices of children, such voices as do not belong to earth, and resemble those

which the new-born still hear, and the dying begin to hear. This chant came from the gloomy building that commanded the garden, and at the moment when the noise of the demons was retiring it seemed like a choir of angels approaching in the dark. Cosette and Jean Valjean fell on their knees; they knew not what it was, they knew not where they were, but both man and child, the penitent and the innocent, felt that they must fall on their knees. While the voices sang, Jean Valjean thought of nothing else. The singing ceased; it had probably lasted some time, but Jean Valjean could not have said how long, for hours of ecstasy never occupy more than a minute. All had become silent again: there was no sound in the garden, no sound in the street; all that that threatened, all that that reassured, had faded away.

As the ground was damp, the shed open on all sides, and the wind grew more cutting every moment, Jean Valjean took off his coat and wrapped Cosette up in it.

"Wait for me a minute," he said.

He left the ruin, and began walking along the large building in search of some better shelter. After passing the inner angle of the edifice he noticed that he had come to some arched windows, and perceived a faint light. He raised himself on tip-toe and looked through one of the windows; they all belonged to a large hall, paved with stones, in which nothing could be distinguished but a little light and great shadows. The light came from a night-lamp burning in the corner. This hall was deserted, and nothing was stirring in it, and yet, after a long look, he fancied that he could see, on the ground, something that seemed to be covered with a pall and resembled a human form. It was stretched out flat, with its face against the stones, its arms forming a cross, and motionless as death. From a species of snake which dragged along the pavement, it looked as if this sinister form had a rope round its neck. The whole hall was bathed in that mist of badly-lighted places, which intensifies the horror.

Though he remained gazing for a time which appeared to him very long, the outstretched form made no movement. All at once he felt himself assailed by an indescribable horror, and he ran off toward the shed without daring to look back. When he reached the ruin he was panting, his knees gave way, and the perspiration was running down his back. Where

was he? What was this strange house? An edifice full of nocturnal mystery, calling souls in the darkness, the voice of angels, and when they arrive, suddenly offering them this frightful vision. It was not a dream; but he was obliged to touch the stones in order to believe it. Cold, anxiety, apprehension, and the emotion of the night, brought on him a real fever, and all his ideas were confused in his brain. He went up to Cosette; she was asleep with her head upon a stone. He sat down by her side, and began gazing at her.

Through the reverie into which he had fallen, he had heard for some time past a singular noise, like a bell being rung, and it was in the garden. This noise made Jean Valjean turn, and he saw that there was some one in the garden. A being looking like a man was walking among the melon frames, rising, stooping, and stopping with regular movements, as if he was dragging or stretching out something on the ground. This man was apparently lame. Jean Valjean gave the continual, trembling start of the unhappy. Just now he shuddered because the garden was deserted, and now he shuddered because there was some one in it. He said to himself that Javert and the police had probably not gone away, that they had, in any case, left watchmen in the street; and that if this man discovered him he would give an alarm and hand him over to the police. He gently raised the still sleeping Cosette in his arms, and carried her behind a mass of old furniture in the most remote part of the shed; Cosette did not stir. From this spot he observed the movements of the being in the melon ground; the strange thing was that the noise of the bell followed this man's every movement. It appeared evident that the bell was fastened to him; but in that case what could be the meaning of it? While asking himself this question he touched Cosette's hands; they were chilled.

"Cosette!" he said in a whisper.

She did not open her eyes. He shook her sharply, but she did not awake.

"Can she be dead?" he said to himself, and he rose, shivering from head to foot.

The most frightful thoughts crossed his mind. He remembered that sleep in the open air in a cold night might be mortal. Cosette was lying stretched out motionless at his feet. She was breathing, but so faintly that it seemed as if the respira-

tion would cease at any moment. How was he to warm her? how was he to wake her? All that did not refer to this slipped from his mind, and he rushed wildly from the shed. It was absolutely necessary that Cosette should be in bed before a fire within a quarter of an hour.

Jean Valjean walked straight up to the man whom he saw in the garden, and while doing so took from his pocket a rouleau of silver. This man was looking down, and did not see him coming, and in a few strides Jean Valjean was by his side, and addressed him with the cry, "One hundred francs."

The man started and raised his eyes.

"One hundred francs to be gained," Jean Valjean continued, "if you will find me a shelter for this night."

The moon fully lit up Jean Valjean's alarmed face.

"Why, it is you, Father Madeleine!" the man said.

The name uttered thus in the darkness at this strange spot, by this strange man, made Jean Valjean recoil, for he expected everything save that. The man who addressed him was a stooping, lame old man, dressed nearly like a peasant, and wearing on his left leg a leather knee-cap, from which hung a rather large bell.

"Who are you? and what is this house?" Jean Valjean asked.

"Oh, Lord, that is too strong," the old man exclaimed; "why, did you not get me the situation? What, don't you recognize me? You saved my life."

He turned, a moonbeam played on his face, and Jean Valjean recognized old Fauchelevent.

"Ah!" he said, "it is you? oh, now I recognize you. And what are you doing here?"

"Why! I am covering my melons. But how have you got here?"

Jean Valjean, feeling himself known by this man, at least under the name of Madeleine, only advanced cautiously. He multiplied his questions, and curiously enough they changed parts,—he, the intruder, became the questioner.

"And what is that bell you have on your knee?"

"That?" Fauchelevent said; "it is that they may avoid me."

"What on earth do you mean?"

Old Fauchelevent gave an inimitable wink.

"Oh, Lord, they are only women in this house, and lots of

girls. It seems that I should be dangerous to meet, and so the bell warns them; when I come, they go."

"What is this house?"

"Oh, nonsense, you know."

"Indeed I do not."

"Why, you got me the gardener's place here."

"Answer me as if I knew nothing."

"Well, it is the convent of the Little Picpus, then."

Jean Valjean's recollections returned to him. Chance, that is to say, Providence, had brought him to the very convent in the Quartier St. Antoine, where Fauchelevent, after his accident, had been engaged on his recommendation two years back.

"But come, tell me," Fauchelevent continued, "how the deuce did you get in here, Father Madeleine? for though you are a saint, you are a man, and no men are admitted here."

"Why, you are."

"Well, only I."

"And yet," Jean Valjean continued, "I must remain."

Jean Valjean then walked up to the gardener, and said in a grave voice,—

"Fauchelevent, I saved your life. Well, you can do for me to-day what I did for you formerly."

"Oh! it would be a blessing from heaven, if I could repay you a slight portion! Save your life! M. Madeleine, you can dispose of an old man as you please. What do you wish me to do?"

"I will explain: have you a room?"

"I have a cottage behind the ruins of the old convent, in a corner which no one visits, with three rooms."

"Good," said Jean Valjean; "now I will ask two things of you. First, that you will tell nobody what you know about me; and, secondly, that you will not try to learn anything further."

"As you please. I know that you can do nothing but what is honest, and that you have ever been a man after God's heart. And then, again, it was you who got me this situation, and I am at your service."

"Enough; now come with me, and we will go and fetch the child."

"Ah," said Fauchelevent, "there is a child."

He did not add a word, but followed Jean Valjean as a dog follows its master. In less than half an hour, Cosette, who had become rosy again by the heat of a good fire, was asleep in the old gardener's bed. The two men were seated near the fire at a table on which Fauchelevent had placed a lump of cheese, biscuits, a bottle of wine and two glasses, and the old man said to Jean Valjean as he laid his hand on his knee,—

"Ah, Father Madeleine! you did not recognize me at once; you save people's lives and forget them afterwards! Oh, that is wrong, for they remember you; you are an ungrateful man."

The events of which we have just seen the back, so to speak, had occurred under the simplest conditions. When Jean Valjean, on the night of the day on which Javert arrested him by Fantine's death-bed, broke out of M——jail, the police supposed that the escaped convict would proceed to Paris. They sought there the ex-mayor of M——, and Javert was summoned to assist in the search, and in truth powerfully assisted in recapturing Jean Valjean. The zeal and intelligence he displayed in this office were noticed by M. Chabouillet, Secretary to the Prefecture under Count Anglès, and this gentleman, who had before been a friend to Javert, had the police-inspector of M—— appointed to the Paris district.

He thought no more of Jean Valjean until in December, 1823. Javert, who was a legitimist, had taken up a newspaper to learn the details of the triumphal entry of the "Prince Generalissimo" into Bayonne. When he had finished the article, the name of Jean Valjean at the foot of a column, attracted him. The newspaper announced that the convict Jean Valjean was dead, and published the fact in such formal terms that Javert did not doubt it. He musing said, "That is the best bolt," then threw away the paper, and thought no more of the subject. Some time after, it happened that a report was sent by the Prefecture of the Seine et Oise to that of Paris about the abduction of a child, under peculiar circumstances, in the parish of Montfermeil. The child who had been entrusted by her mother to a publican answered to the name of Cosette, and her mother was a certain Fantine, who had died in a hospital, it was not known when or where. This report passed under Javert's eyes, and rendered him thoughtful. The name of Fantine was familiar to him; he remembered that Jean Valjean had made him laugh by asking him for a respite of

three days to go and fetch this creature's child. He remembered that Jean Valjean was arrested at Paris at the very moment when he was getting into the Montfermeil coach, and some facts had led to the supposition at the time that he had taken a trip to the vicinity of the village on the previous day, for he had not been seen in the village itself. What was his business at Montfermeil? Javert now understood it—Fantine's daughter was there, and Jean Valjean had gone to fetch her. Now this child had just been stolen by a stranger; could it be Jean Valjean?—but he was dead. Javert, without saying a word to anybody, took the coach at the *Pewter Platter*, and went off to Montfermeil.

He expected to find here a great clearing up, but only found a great obscurity. Thénardier, with his admirable instinct, very speedily comprehended that it is never useful to set the authorities at work, and that his complaint about the abduction of Cosette would have the primary result of fixing the flashing gaze of justice upon himself. He affected amazement when people spoke about "the stolen child." He did not at all understand; he had certainly complained at the first moment about his little darling being taken from him so suddenly; but it was her grandfather who had come to fetch her in the most natural way in the world. Javert, however, drove a few questions like probes into Thénardier's story: "Who was this grandfather, and what was his name?" Thénardier answered simply "He is a rich farmer; I saw his passport, and I fancy his name was M. Guillaume Lambert." Lambert is a respectable and most reassuring name, and so Javert returned to Paris. "Jean Valjean is really dead," he said to himself, "and I am an ass."

He was beginning to forget the whole affair again, when in the course of March, 1824, he heard talk of a peculiar character who lived in the parish of St. Medard, and was surnamed the "beggar who gives alms." This man was said to be an annuitant, who lived alone with a little girl of eight years of age, who knew nothing about herself, except that she came from Montfermeil. He wore a horrible old yellow coat, which was said to be worth several millions, as it was lined all through with bank-notes. This decidedly piqued Javert's curiosity. In order to see this annuitant closer, he one day borrowed the beggar's rags and the place where the old spy crouched every

evening, snuffling his orisons through his nose, and spying between his prayers. "The suspicious individual" really came up to Javert thus travestied, and gave him alms. At this moment Javert raised his head, and the shock which Jean Valjean received on fancying that he recognized Javert, Javert received on fancying that he recognized Jean Valjean. Still, Javert felt serious doubts, and when in doubt, Javert, a scrupulous man, never collared anybody. He followed his man to No. 50–52, and made the old woman talk, which was no difficult task. She confirmed the fact of the great-coat lined with millions, and told the story about the thousand-franc note. Javert hired a room, and took possession of it that same night. He listened at the door of the mysterious lodger, in the hope of hearing his voice, but Jean Valjean saw his candle through the key-hole, and foiled the spy by holding his tongue.

When Jean Valjean left the house at night, Javert was waiting for him behind the trees with two men. Javert followed Jean Valjean from tree to tree, and then from street corner to street corner, and had not once taken his eye off him. Why did Javert not arrest him, though? Because he was still in doubt. A few arbitrary arrests, denounced by the newspapers, had found an echo in the Chambers, and rendered the Prefecture timid. He walked along, therefore, in great perplexity, asking himself a hundred questions about this enigmatical personage. It was not till some time after that he decidedly recognized Jean Valjean in the Rue Pontoise, by the brilliant light that poured from a wine shop; but, instead of arresting him at once, as he might have done, he delayed, that he might ask for further support at the police-office in the same street.

Javert certainly committed errors in his campaign against Jean Valjean. He was probably wrong in hesitating to recognize the ex-galley slave, for a glance ought to have been sufficient for him. He was wrong in not apprehending him purely and simply at No. 50-52. He was wrong in not arresting him, upon recognition, in the Rue Pontoise. He was wrong to arrange with his colleagues in the bright moonlight, although certainly advice is useful, and it is as well to interrogate those dogs which deserve credence. Above all, he was wrong, on finding the trail again at the Austerlitz Bridge,

in playing the dangerous and foolish trick of holding such a man by a string. He fancied himself stronger than he really was, and that he could play with the lion as if it were a mouse. At the same time he imagined himself too weak when he fancied that he must procure help; it was a fatal precaution, and the loss of precious time.

However this may be, even at the moment when Javert perceived that Jean Valjean had slipped from his clutches he did not lose his head. Certain that the convict could not be very far off, he established watches, and beat up the quarter the whole night through. The first thing he saw was the cut cord of the lantern. This was a valuable sign, which, however, led him astray so far that it made him turn all his attention to the Genrot blind alley. There are in this alley low walls, surrounding gardens which skirt open fields, and Jean Valjean had evidently fled in that direction. Javert explored the gardens and fields as if looking for a needle, and at daybreak he left two intelligent men on duty, and returned to the Prefecture of Police, looking as hang-dog as a spy captured by a robber.

CHAPTER X

HALF a century ago nothing more resembled any ordinary porte cochère than that of No. 62, Petite Rue Picpus. This door, generally half-open in the most inviting manner, allowed you to see a court-yard with walls covered with vines, and the face of a lounging porter. If you succeeded, which was not easy, in passing the porter, you entered on the right a small hall from which ran a staircase enclosed between two walls, and so narrow that only one person could go up at a time. If you were not frightened by the canary-coloured plaster and chocolate wainscot of this staircase, and still boldly ascended, you crossed two landings and found yourself in a passage on the first-floor, where the yellow distemper and chocolate skirting board followed you with a quiet pertinacity. The staircase and passage were lighted by two fine windows, but the latter soon made a bend and became dark. When you had doubled this cape, you found yourself before a door, which was the more mysterious because it was not closed. You pushed it open, and found yourself in a small

room about six feet square, well scrubbed, clean, and frigid, and hung with a yellow-green sprigged paper, at fifteen sous the piece. The walls were bare, and the room unfurnished—there was not even a chair.

You looked again, and saw in the wall facing the door a square hole, covered with a black knotty substantial cross-barred grating, which formed diamonds—at least an inch and a half across. The little green sprigs on the yellow paper came right up to these bars, and the funereal contact did not make them start or wither. Even supposing that any human being had been so wondrously thin as to attempt to go in or out by the square hole, the bars would have prevented him: but, though they did not let the body pass, the eyes, that is to say, the mind, could. It seemed as if this had been thought of, for it had been lined with a tin plate, in which were bored thousands of holes more microscopic than those of a strainer. Beneath this plate was an opening exactly like the mouth of a letter-box, and a bell-wire hung by the side of this hole. If you pulled this wire, a bell tinkled, and you heard a voice close to you which made you start.

"Who is there?" the voice asked.

It was a female voice, a gentle voice, so gentle that it was melancholy. Here, again, there was a magic word which it was necessary to know; if you did not know it, the voice ceased, and the wall became silent again, as if the terrifying darkness of the tomb were on the other side. If you knew the word, the voice continued,—"Turn to the right." You then noticed, facing the window, a door, the upper part of which was of grey painted glass. You raised the latch, walked in, and experienced precisely the same expression as when you enter a box at the theatre, before the gilt grating has been lowered and the chandelier lighted. You were in fact in a species of box, scarce lighted by the faint light that came through the glass door, narrow, furnished with two old chairs and a ragged sofa—a real box with a black entablature to represent the front. This box had a grating, but it was not made of gilt wood as at the opera, but was a monstrous trellis-work of frightfully interlaced iron bars. When your eye began to grow accustomed to this cellar-like gloom, you tried to look through the grating, but could not see more than six inches beyond it; there it met a barrier of black shutters,

connected and strengthened by cross-beams, and painted of a ginger-bread yellow. These shutters were jointed, divided into long thin planks, and covered the whole width of the grating; they were always closed. At the expiration of a few minutes, you heard a voice calling to you from behind the shutters, and saying to you,

"I am here, what do you want with me?"

It was a loved voice, sometimes an adored voice, but you saw nobody, and could scarce hear the sound of breathing. If you fulfilled certain required and very rare conditions, the narrow plank of one of the shutters opened opposite to you, and behind the shutter you perceived, as far as the grating would allow, a head, of which you only saw the mouth and chin, for the rest was covered by a black veil. You caught a glimpse of a black wimple and of a scarce distinct form, covered by a black pall. This head spoke to you, but did not look at you, and never smiled. The light that came from behind you was so arranged that you saw her in brightness, and she saw you in darkness; this light was a symbol. Still your eyes plunged eagerly through the opening into this place, closed against all looks,—a profound vacuum surrounded this form clothed in mourning. What you saw was the interior of a nunnery, which was called the Convent of the Perpetual Adoration. The box in which you found yourself was the parlour, and the first voice that addressed you was that of a lay sister, who always sat, silent and motionless, on the other side of the wall, near the square opening which was defended by the iron grating and the tin plate with the thousand holes like a double visor.

This convent was a community of Bernardines belonging to the obedience of Martin Verga, and the subjects of St. Benedict. Next to the rule of the Carmelites, who walk barefoot, wear a piece of wicker-work on their throat, and never sit down, the hardest rule is that of the Bernardo-Benedictines of Martin Verga. They are dressed in black with a wimple, which, by the express order of St. Benedict, comes up to the chin; a serge gown with wide sleeves, a large woollen veil, the wimple cut square on the chest, and the coif, which comes down to their eyes,—such is their dress. All is black, excepting the coif, which is white. Novices wear the same garb, but all white, while the professed nuns also wear a rosary by their side.

At the period when this story is laid, there was a boarding school attached to the convent, the pupils being young ladies of noble birth and generally rich. These young ladies, educated by the nuns between four walls, grew up with a horror of the world and of the century. One of them said to us one day, "Seeing the street pavement made me shudder from head to foot." They were dressed in blue with a white cap and a plated or gilt Holy Ghost on the chest. On certain high festivals, especially Saint Martha, they were allowed, as a high favour and supreme happiness, to dress themselves like nuns, and perform the offices and practices of St. Benedict for the whole day. At first the nuns lent them their black robes, but this was deemed a profanity, and the prioress forbade it, so the novices alone were permitted to make such loans.

The young ladies filled this grave house with delightful reminiscences. At certain hours childhood sparkled in this cloister. The bell for recreation was rung, the gate creaked on its hinges, and the birds whispered to each other, "Here are the children." The girls sported beneath the eye of the nuns, for the glance of impeccability does not disturb innocence; and, thanks to these children, there was a simple hour among so many austere hours. The little girls jumped about, and the elder danced, and nothing could be so ravishing and august as all the fresh, innocent expansion of these childish souls. In this house, more perhaps than elsewhere, those childish remarks were made which possess so much grace, and which make the hearer laugh thoughtfully.

In one of the cloisters, too, was picked up the following confession, written beforehand, so as not to forget it, by a little sinner of seven years of age:—

"My father, I accuse myself of having been avaricious.

"My father, I accuse myself of having committed adultery.

"My father, I accuse myself of having raised my eyes to gentlemen."

Each house of this nature has its peculiarities. At the beginning of this century, Ecouen was one of those places in which the childhood of children is passed in an almost august gloom. At Ecouen a distinction was made between the virgins and flower-girls, in taking rank in the procession of the Holy Sacrament. There were also the "canopies," and the "censers," the former holding the cords of the canopy, the

latter swinging the censers in front of the Holy Sacrament, while four virgins walked in front. On the morning of the great day, it was not rare to hear people say in the dormitory,—"Who is a virgin?" Madame Campan mentions a remark made by a little girl of seven to a grown-up girl of sixteen, who walked at the head of the procession, while she, the little one, remained behind: "You are a virgin, you, but I am not one."

All the nuns were kind to the children, and only stern to themselves; there were no fires lit except in the school-house, and the food there was luxurious when compared with that of the convent. The only thing was that when a child passed a nun and spoke to her, the latter did not answer. This rule of silence produced the result, that in the whole convent language was withdrawn from human creatures and given to inanimate objects. At one moment it was the church bell that spoke, at another the gardener's; and a very sonorous gong, placed by the side of the sister porter, and which could be heard all through the house, indicated by various raps, which were a sort of acoustic telegraphy, all the actions of natural life which had to be accomplished, and summoned a nun, if required, to the parlour. Each person and each thing had its raps: the prioress had one and one; the sub-prioress one and two; six-five announced the school hour, so that the pupils talked of going to six-five; four-four was Madame Genlis' signal when she boarded in the convent, and as it was heard very often, uncharitable persons said she was the "diable à quatre." Nineteen strokes announced a great event,—it was the opening of the cloister door, a terrible iron plate all bristling with bolts, which only turned on its hinges before the Archbishop. With the exception of that dignitary and the gardener, no other man entered the convent, but the boarders saw two others,—one was the chaplain, Abbé Banès, an old ugly man, whom they were allowed to contemplate through a grating; while the other was M. Ansiaux, the drawing-master, who, in a letter written by an ex-boarder, is described as an odious old hunchback. So we see that all the men were picked.

The convent of the Little Picpus occupied a large trapeze, formed by the four streets to which we have so frequently alluded, and which surrounded it like a moat. The convent was composed of several buildings and a garden. The main

building, regarded in its entirety, was a juxtaposition of hybrid constructions, which, looked at from a balloon, would very exactly form a gallows laid on the ground. The long arm of the gallows occupied the whole of the Rue Droit-mur, comprised between the Little Rue Picpus and the Rue Polonceau, while the shorter arm was a tall, grey, stern, grated façade, looking on the Little Rue Picpus, of which the porte cochère, No. 62, was the extremity. Towards the centre of this façade dust and ashes whitened an old, low-arched gate, where the spiders made their webs, and which was only opened for an hour or two on Sundays, and on the rare occasions when the coffin of a nun left the convent; this was the public entrance to the church. The elbow of the gallows was a square room, used as an office, and which the nuns called the "buttery." In the long arm were the cells of the mothers, sisters, and novices; in the short one the kitchens, the refectory, along which a cloister ran, and the church. Between No. 62 and the corner of Aumarais Lane was the school, which could not be seen from the exterior. The rest of the trapeze formed the garden, which was much lower than the level of the Rue Polonceau, and this caused the walls to be much loftier inside than out. The garden, which was slightly arched, had at its centre and on the top of a mound a fine-pointed and conical fir-tree, from which ran, as from the boss of shield, four large walks, with eight smaller ones arranged two and two, so that, had the enclosure been circular, the geometrical plan of the walks would have resembled a cross laid upon a wheel. The walks, which all ran to the extremely irregular walls of the garden, were of unequal length, and were bordered by gooseberry bushes. At the end a poplar walk ran from the ruins of the old convent, which was at the angle of the Rue Droit-mur, to the little convent, which was at the corner of Aumarais Lane. In front of the little convent was what was called the small garden. If we add to this *ensemble* a court-yard, all sorts of varying angles formed by the inside buildings, prison walls, and the long black line of roofs that ran along the other side of the Rue Polonceau, as the sole prospect, we can form an exact idea of what the house of the Bernardines of Little Picpus was five-and-forty years ago. This sacred house was built on the site of a famous racket court in the 16th century, which was called the "Tripot des onze mille

diables." All these streets, indeed, were the oldest in Paris; the names Droit-mur and Aumarais are very old, but the streets that bear them are far older. Aumarais Lane was before called Maugout Lane; the Rue Droit-mur was called the Rue des Eglantines, for GOD opened the flowers before man cut building-stones.

It was into this house that Jean Valjean had fallen from heaven, as Fauchelevent said. He had climbed the garden-wall which formed the angle of the Rue Polonceau; the hymn of angels which he heard in the middle of the night was the nuns chanting matins; the hall which he had caught a glimpse of in the darkness, was the chapel; the phantom he had seen stretched out on the ground was the phantom making reparation; and the bell which had so strangely surprised him was the gardener's bell fastened to Fauchelevent's knee. So soon as Cosette was in bed Jean Valjean and Fauchelevent supped on a glass of wine and a lump of cheese before a good blazing log; then, as the only bed in the cottage was occupied by Cosette, each threw himself on a truss of straw. Before closing his eyes Jean Valjean said,—"I must stop here henceforth," and this remark trotted about Fauchelevent's head all night. For a wretch in Valjean's position, this convent was the safest place,—because if he succeeded in remaining in it who would come to seek him there? Inhabiting an impossible spot was salvation.

On his side, Fauchelevent racked his brains. How was M. Madeleine, in spite of all the surrounding walls, here?—How was he here with a child? People do not scale a perpendicular wall with a child in their arms. Who was this child? Where did they both come from? Since Fauchelevent had been in the convent he had received no news from M——, and did not know what had occurred there. The gardener was stumbling among conjectures and saw nothing clear but this,—"M. Madeleine saved my life." This sole certainty was sufficient, and decided him; he said to himself, "It is my turn now."

Fauchelevent was an old man, who had been during life selfish, and who, at the end of his days, limping, infirm, and taking no interest in the world, found it pleasant to be grateful, and seeing a virtuous action to be done, he flung himself upon it like a man who, on the point of death, lays his hand on a glass of good wine which he had never tasted, and eagerly drinks it off. We may add, that the air which he had been

breathing for some years in this convent, had destroyed his personality, and had eventually rendered some good deed a necessity for him. He, therefore, formed the resolution of devoting himself for M. Madeleine. At day-break, after thinking enormously, Father Fauchelevent opened his eyes and saw M. Madeleine sitting on his truss of straw, and looking at the sleeping Cosette; Fauchelevent sat up too, and said,—

"Now that you are here, how will you manage to get on?" This remark summed up the situation, and aroused Jean Valjean from his reverie. The two men held counsel.

"In the first place," said Fauchelevent, "you must begin by not setting foot outside this cottage, neither you nor the little one. One step in the garden, and we are done."

"That is true."

"Monsieur Madeleine," Fauchelevent continued, "you have arrived at a very lucky moment, I ought to say, a very unhappy one, for one of our ladies is dangerously ill. In consequence of this, folk will not look much this way. It seems that she is dying, and the forty hours' prayers are being said. The whole community is aroused, and that occupies them. The person who is on the point of going off is a saint. There will be a service for the dying, and then the service for the dead. For to-day we shall be all quiet here; but I do not answer for to-morrow."

"Still," Jean Valjean observed, "this cottage is retired, it is hidden by a sort of ruin, there are trees, and it cannot be seen from the convent."

"There are the little ones."

"What little ones?" Jean Valjean asked.

As Fauchelevent opened his mouth to answer, a stroke rang out from a bell.

"The nun is dead," he said, "that is the knell."

And he made Jean Valjean a sign to listen. A second stroke rang out.

"It is the passing bell, Monsieur Madeleine. The bell will go on so minute after minute for twenty-four hours, till the body leaves the church. You see they play about; at recreations they need only lose a ball, and, in spite of the prohibition, they will come and look for it here and ransack everything. Those cherubs are little devils. I can tell you that you would soon be discovered. They would cry out, 'Why, it's a man!'

But there is no danger to-day, for there will be no recreation. The day will be spent in prayer. You hear the bell, as I told you, one stroke a minute,—it is the knell."

"I understand, Father Fauchelevent, they are boarders."

And Jean Valjean thought to himself;

"It is a chance for educating Cosette."

Fauchelevent exclaimed,—

"By Job, I should think they are boarders! they would sniff round you, and then run away. To be a man here is to have the plague, as you can see; a bell is fastened to my paw as if I were a wild beast."

Jean Valjean reflected more and more deeply. "This convent would save us," he muttered, and then added aloud,—

"Yes, the difficulty is to remain."

"No," said Fauchelevent, "it is to go out. In order to come in, you must go out. The nuns require that people should come in by the front door. Can't you go out by the way that you came in? Come, I don't want to ask you a question,—but where did you come in?"

Jean Valjean turned pale: the mere idea of going back to that formidable street made him tremble. He figured to himself the police still searching in the quarter, the agents watching, and Javert perhaps in a corner lurking for his prey.

"Impossible!" he said. "Suppose, Father Fauchelevent, that I really fell from above."

"Why, I believe so," Fauchelevent continued, "you need not tell me so. Your little girl is still asleep; what is her name?"

"Cosette."

"Is she your daughter? I mean are you her grandfather?"

"Yes."

"To get her out will be easy. I can put my dorser on my back, with the little girl in it, and go out. You will tell her to be very quiet, and she will be under the hood. I will leave her for the necessary time with an old friend of mine, a fruiteress in the Rue du Chemin Vert, who is deaf, and where there is a little bed. I will shout in her ear that it is my niece, and bid her keep her for me till to-morrow; then the little one will come in with you, for I mean to bring you in again. But how will you manage to get out?"

Jean Valjean shook his head.

Fauchelevent scratched the tip of his ear with the middle

finger of his left hand, which was a sign of serious embarrassment. A peal caused a diversion.

"That is the doctor going away," said Fauchelevent. When the doctor has countersigned the passport for Paradise, the undertakers send a coffin, and I nail up. That is part of my gardening, for a gardener is a bit of a grave-digger. The coffin is placed in the vestry room which communicates with the street, and which no man is allowed to enter but the doctor, for I don't count the undertakers and myself as men. It is in this room that I nail up the coffin. A box is brought, in which there is nothing, and it is carried off with something in it; and that's what a burial is. *De Profundis*. The grave is dug in the Vaugirard cemetery. I have a friend there, Father Mestienne, the grave-digger. The nuns of this house possess the privilege of being carried to that cemetery at nightfall. But what events since yesterday! Mother Crucifixion is dead, and Father Madeleine—"

"Is buried," Jean Valjean said, with a sad smile.

Fauchelevent marked the word.

"Well, if you were here altogether, it would be a real burial."

Another peal rang out. Fauchelevent quickly took down his knee-cap and put it on.

"This time it is for me. The Mother Prioress wants me. M. Madeleine, don't stir, but wait for me. There is something up; if you are hungry, there is bread, wine, and cheese."

Jean Valjean watched him hurrying across the garden as rapidly as his leg would allow. Less than ten minutes after, Father Fauchelevent, whose bell routed all the nuns as he passed, tapped gently at a door, and a soft voice answered, "For ever, for ever," that is to say, "Come in." It was the door of the parlour reserved expressly for the gardener, and adjoining the chapter-room. The prioress, seated on the only chair in the room, was waiting for Fauchelevent.

The gardener gave a timid bow, and remained in the doorway of the cell; the prioress, who was telling her beads, raised her eyes, and said,—

"Father Fauvent, I summoned you. I wish to speak with you."

"And I," said Fauchelevent, with a boldness which made him tremble inwards, "have something to say to the most Reverend Mother."

The prioress looked at him.

"Ah! you have a communication to make to me?"

"A request."

"Well, speak."

The good man, with the assurance of a servant who knows his value, began a rustic address to the prioress, which was rather diffuse and very artful. He talked a good deal about his age, his infirmities, the growing demands of his work, nights to pass, as, for instance, the last, in which he was obliged to draw matting over the melon frames, owing to the moon; and he ended with this, that he had a brother (the prioress gave a start) who was not young that if leave were granted, this brother would come and live with him and help him; he was an excellent gardener, and would be of more use to the community than himself was; and that, on the other hand, if his brother's services were not accepted, as he felt unequal to his work, he would be compelled to give up his situation; and that his brother had a little girl whom he would bring with him, and who would be brought into the house, and might, who knew? become a nun some day. When he had finished speaking, the prioress broke off her occupation of letting the beads of her rosary slip through her fingers, and said,

"Could you procure a strong iron bar between this and to-night?"

"What to do?"

"To act as a lever."

"Yes, Reverend Mother," Father Fauchelevent replied.

The prioress, without adding a syllable, rose and walked into the adjoining room, where the chapter was assembled. Fauchelevent was left alone.

About a quarter of an hour passed ere the prioress came in again, and sat down on her chair.

"Father Fauvent, do you know the chapel?"

"I have a little cage in it where I hear mass and the offices."

"A stone will have to be lifted; the one at the side of the altar that which closes the vault."

"That is a job where two men would be useful."

"Mother Ascension, who is as strong as a man, will help you."

"A woman is not a man. My brother is a strong fellow!"

There was a silence, and the prioress, after a pout of the lower lip, which looked like hesitation, continued,—

"Father Fauvent, you are aware that a mother died this morning?"

"No."

"Did you not hear the bell?"

"Nothing can be heard at the end of the garden, I can hardly distinguish my own ring."

"She died at day-break, it is Mother Crucifixion, a blessed saint. The mothers have carried her into the dead-room adjoining the church. No other man but you can or ought to enter that room, so keep careful watch. Father Fauvent, Mother Crucifixion had a very blessed death. She retained her senses up to the last moment; she spoke to us, and then conversed with the angels. She gave us her last commands; if you had more faith, and if you had been in her cell, she would have cured your leg by touching it. She smiled, and we all felt that she was living again in GOD,—there was Paradise in such a death."

Fauchelevent fancied that it was the end of a prayer; "Amen," he said.

"Father Fauvent, what the dead wish must be carried out."

The prioress told a few beads. Fauchelevent held his tongue; then the lady continued,—

"Father Fauvent, Mother Crucifixion will be buried in the coffin in which she has slept for twenty years."

"Then I shall have to nail her up in that coffin?"

"Yes."

"And we shall not employ the undertaker's coffin?"

"Exactly."

"I am at the orders of the most Reverend Community."

"The four singing mothers will help you."

"To nail up the coffin? I do not want them."

"No, to let it down into the vault under the altar."

Fauchelevent started.

"The vault under the altar?"

"Yes."

"But——"

"We must obey the dead. It was the last wish of Mother Crucifixion to be buried in the vault under the chapel altar, not to be placed in profane soil, and to remain when dead at

the place where she had prayed when alive. She asked this of us, indeed ordered it."

"But it is forbidden."

"Forbidden by man, ordered by God."

"Suppose it oozed out?"

"We have confidence in you."

"Oh! I am a stone of your wall."

"The chapter is assembled; the vocal mothers have decided that Mother Crucifixion should be interred according to her wish, under our altar. Only think, Father Fauvent, if miracles were to take place here! what a glory in God for the community!"

"But, Reverend Mother, supposing the Sanitary Commissioner——"

"The world is as nothing in presence of the cross. What do we know about the state, the regulations, the administration, and the public undertaker? Any witnesses would be indignant at the way in which we are treated. The right of the monasteries to sepulture is indubitable, and it can only be denied by fanatics and schismatics."

The prioress breathed, and then turned to Fauchelevent.

"Father Fauvent, is it settled? Can we reckon on you?"

"I will obey; I am entirely devoted to the convent."

"You will close the coffin, and the sisters will carry it into the chapel. The office for the dead will be read, and then we shall return to the cloisters. Between eleven and twelve you will come with your iron bar, and everything will be performed with the utmost secrecy: there will be no one in the chapel but the four singing mothers, Mother Ascension, and yourself."

"And the sister at the stake?"

"She will not listen. Moreover, what the convent knows the world is ignorant of."

There was another pause, after which the prioress continued,—

"You will remove your bell, for it is unnecessary for the sister at the stake to notice your presence."

"Reverend Mother?"

"What is it, Father Fauvent?"

"Has the physician of the dead paid his visit?"

"He will do so at four o'clock to-day: the bell has been rung to give him notice. But do you not hear any ringing?"

"I only pay attention to my own summons."

"Very good, Father Fauvent, about three quarters of an hour before midnight, do not forget."

"Reverend Mother, if you have other jobs like this, my brother is a strong fellow for you, a Turk."

"You will be as quick as possible."

"I cannot do things quickly, for I am infirm, and for that reason require an assistant. I halt."

"Father Fauvent, now I think of it, take a whole hour, for it will not be too much. Be at the High Altar with your crowbar at eleven o'clock, for the service begins at midnight, and all must be finished a good quarter of an hour previously."

"I will do everything to prove my zeal to the community. I will nail up the coffin, and be in the chapel at eleven o'clock precisely. Two men would be better, but no matter, I shall have my crowbar, we will open the vault, let down the coffin, and close it again. Reverend Mother, is all arranged thus?"

"No."

"What is there still?"

"There is the empty coffin."

This was a difficulty; Fauchelevent thought of and on it, and so did the prioress.

"Father Fauvent, what must be done with the other coffin?"

"It must be buried."

"Empty?"

Another silence. Fauchelevent made with his left hand that sort of gesture which dismisses a disagreeable question.

"Reverend Mother, I will nail up the coffin and cover it with the pall."

"Yes, but the bearers, while placing it in the hearse, and lowering it into the grave, will soon perceive that there is nothing in it."

"Oh, the de—!" Fauchelevent exclaimed. The prioress began a cross, and looked intently at the gardener; the *evil* stuck in his throat, and he hastily improvised an expedient to cause the oath to be forgotten.

"Reverend Mother, I will put earth in the coffin, which will produce the effect of a body."

"You are right, for earth is the same as a human being. So you will manage the empty coffin?"

"I take it on myself."

The face of the prioress, which had hitherto been troubled

and clouded, now grew serene. She made the sign of a superior dismissing an inferior, and Fauchelevent walked towards the door. As he was going out the prioress gently raised her voice.

"Father Fauvent, I am satisfied with you; to-morrow, after the interment, bring me your brother, and tell him to bring me his daughter."

Monsieur Fauchelevent was perplexed, and he spent upwards of a quarter of an hour in returning to the garden cottage. Cosette was awake, and Jean Valjean had seated her by the fire-side. At the moment when Fauchelevent entered Jean Valjean was pointing to the gardener's *hotte* leaning in a corner, and saying to her,—

"Listen to me carefully, little Cosette. We are obliged to leave this house, but shall return to it, and be very happy. The good man will carry you out in that thing upon his back, and you will wait for me with a lady till I come to fetch you. If you do not wish Madame Thénardier to catch you again, obey and say not a word."

Cosette nodded her head gravely; at the sound Fauchelevent made in opening the door Valjean turned round.

"Well?"

"All is arranged, and nothing is so," said Fauchelevent. "I have leave to bring you in, but to bring you in you must go out. That is the difficulty; it is easy enough with the little one, but how the deuce are you going to get out? for everything must be settled to-morrow, as the prioress expects you then."

Then he explained to Valjean that it was a reward for a service which he, Fauchelevent, was rendering the community. It was part of his duty to attend to the funerals, nail up the coffin, and assist the grave-digger at the cemetery. The nun who had died that morning requested to be buried, in the coffin which served her as bed, in the vault under the altar of the chapel. This was forbidden by the police regulations, but she was one of those women to whom nothing could be refused. The prioress and vocal mothers intended to carry out the wishes of the deceased, and so, all the worse for the government. He, Fauchelevent, would nail up the coffin in the cell, lift the stone in the chapel, and let down the body into the vault. As a reward for this the prioress would admit into the house his

brother as gardener, and his niece as boarder. The prioress had told him to bring his brother the next day after the pretended funeral, but he could not bring M. Madeleine in from outside if he were not there. This was his first embarrassment, and then he had a second in the empty coffin.

"What do you mean by the empty coffin?" Valjean asked.

"A nun dies, and the physician of the municipality comes and says,—'There is a nun dead.' Government sends a coffin, the next day it sends a hearse and undertaker's men to fetch the coffin and carry it to the cemetery. They will come and lift the coffin, and there's nothing in it."

"Put something in it."

"A dead person? I haven't such a thing."

"Well, then, a living one."

"Who?"

"Myself," said Jean Valjean.

"Oh, you are joking, not speaking seriously."

"Most seriously. Must I not get out of here?"

"Of course."

"The point is to get out unseen, and that is a way. Where is the coffin?"

"In what is called the dead-house. It is upon two trestles, and covered with the pall."

"What is the length of the coffin?"

"Six feet."

"What is this dead-house?"

"A ground-floor room with a grated window looking on the garden, and two doors, one leading to the church, the other to the convent."

"What church?"

"The street church, the one open to everybody."

"Have you the keys of these doors?"

"No, I have the key of the one communicating with the convent, but the porter has the other."

"When does he open it?"

"Only to let the men pass who come to fetch the body. When the coffin has gone out the door is locked again."

"Who nails up the coffin? Who places the pall over it?"

"I do."

"Are you alone?"

"No other man, excepting the doctor, is allowed to enter the dead-house. It is written on the wall."

"Could you hide me in that house to-night, when all are asleep in the convent?"

"No, but I can hide you in a dark hole opening out of the dead-house, in which I put the burial tools, of which I have the key."

"At what hour to-morrow will the hearse come to fetch the body?"

"At three in the afternoon. The interment takes place at the Vaugirard Cemetery a little before nightfall, for the ground is not very near here."

"I will remain concealed in your tool-house during the night and morning. How about food? for I shall be hungry."

"I will bring you some."

"You can nail me up in the coffin at two o'clock." Fauchelevent recoiled and cracked his finger-bones.

"Oh, it is impossible!"

What seemed to Fauchelevent extraordinary was quite simple to Jean Valjean, for he had gone through worse straits, and any man who has been a prisoner knows how to reduce himself to the diameter of the mode of escape. To be nailed up and carried in a box, to live for a long time in a packing-case, to find air when there is none, to economize one's breath for hours, to manage to choke without dying, was one of Jean Valjean's melancholy talents.

"But how will you manage to breathe?"

"You have a gimlet. You will make a few holes round the mouth, and nail down the lid, without closing it tightly. I must either be captured here or go out in the hearse. The only thing I am anxious about is what will take place at the cemetery."

"There is the very thing I am not anxious about," said Fauchelevent; "if you feel sure of getting out of the coffin, I feel sure of getting you out of the grave. The grave-digger is a friend of mine, and a drunkard, of the name of Father Mestienne. We shall arrive a little before twilight, three quarters of an hour before the cemetery gates are closed. The hearse will drive up to the grave, and I shall follow; I shall have a hammer, a chisel, and pincers in my pocket; the hearse stops, the undertaker knots a cord round your coffin and lets you

down ; the priest says the prayers, sprinkles the holy water, and bolts ; I remain alone with Father Mestienne. If he is not drunk, I shall say to him, ' Come and have a drain before the *Bon Coing* closes.' I take him away, make him drunk, which does not take long, as he has always made a beginning ; I lay him under the table, take his card, and return to the cemetery without him. You will have only to deal with me. If he is drunk, I shall say to him, ' Be off, I will do your work for you.' He will go, and I get you out of the hole."

Jean Valjean held out his hand, which Father Fauchelevent seized with a touching peasant devotion.

" It is settled, Father Fauchelevent. All will go well."

The next day, as the sun was setting, the few passers-by on the Boulevard du Maine took off their hats to an old-fashioned hearse, ornamented with death's head, thigh-bones, and tears. In this hearse was a coffin covered with a white pall, on which lay an enormous black cross, like a tall dead woman with hanging arms. A draped carriage, in which could be noticed a priest in his surplice, and a chorister in his red skull cap, followed. Two mutes in a grey uniform with black facings walked on the right and left of the hearse, while behind them came an old man in workman's garb, who halted. The procession proceeded toward the Vaugirard Cemetery. This cemetery had its peculiar usages. The Bernardo-Benedictines of the Little Picpus had obtained permission to be buried there in a separate corner, and by night, because the cemetery had formerly belonged to their community. The grave-diggers, having thus an evening duty in summer and a night duty in winter were subjected to special rules. The gates of Parisian cemeteries were closed at that period at sunset. If any grave-digger were detained at that moment in the cemetery, he had only one way to get out, his card, with which the undertaker's department supplied him. There was a species of letter-box in the shutter of the porter's window ; the grave-digger threw his card into this box, the porter heard it fall, pulled the string, and the small gate opened. If the grave-digger had not his card, he gave his name ; the porter got up, recognized him, and opened the gate with his key ; but in that case the grave-digger paid a fine of fifteen francs.

The sun had not yet set when the hearse with the white pall and black cross entered the avenue of this cemetery, and the

halting man who followed it was no other than Fauchelevent. The interment of Mother Crucifixion in the vault under the altar, getting Cosette out, and introducing Jean Valjean into the dead-house, had been effected without the slightest hitch.

Fauchelevent limped after the hearse with great satisfaction; his twin plots, the one with the nuns, the other with M. Madeleine, one for, the other against, the convent, were getting on famously. What he still had to do was nothing. He could do what he liked with Father Mestienne, and his head exactly fitted Fauchelevent's cap. The gardener's security was complete.

All at once the hearse stopped; it had reached the gates, and the permission for burying must be shown. The undertaker conversed with the porter, and during this colloquy, a stranger stationed himself behind the hearse by Fauchelevent's side. He was a sort of workman, holding a spade under his arm. Fauchelevent looked at the stranger, and asked him,—

"Who are you?"

The man replied, "The grave-digger."

If any man could survive a cannon-ball right in the middle of his chest, he would cut such a face as Fauchelevent did.

"Why, Father Mestienne is the grave-digger."

"He is dead."

Fauchelevent was prepared for anything except this, that a grave-digger could die; and, yet, it is true that grave-diggers themselves die; while digging holes for others, they prepare one for themselves. Fauchelevent stood with widely-opened mouth, and had scarce strength to stammer,—

"Why, it is impossible. The grave-digger is Father Mestienne."

"After Napoleon, Louis XVIII. After Mestienne, Gribier. Rustic, my name is Gribier."

Fauchelevent, who was very pale, stared at Gribier, a tall, thin, livid, thoroughly funereal man. He looked like a broken-down doctor who had turned grave-digger. Fauchelevent burst into a laugh.

"Ah, what funny things do happen! And so Father Mestienne is dead; I feel sorry for him, as he was a jolly fellow. But you are a jolly fellow too, are you not, comrade? We will drink a glass together, eh?"

The man answered, " I have studied, and I never drink."

The hearse had set out again, and was now going along the main avenue. Fauchelevent had decreased his pace, and limped more through anxiety than infirmity. The grave-digger walked in front of him, and Fauchelevent once again surveyed this unknown Gribier. He was one of those men who, when young, look old, and who, though thin, are very strong.

" Comrade ! " Fauchelevent cried, " I am the convent grave-digger."

" My colleague," the man said.

" Are we not going to form an acquaintance ? " Fauchelevent stammered.

" It is formed. You are a rustic, I am a Parisian."

" People never know one another thoroughly till they have drunk together. You will come and drink with me, such an offer cannot be refused."

" Work first."

Fauchelevent thought, " It's all over with me."

The hearse left the main avenue, and turned down a smaller one, which indicated the immediate proximity of the grave. Fauchelevent reduced his pace, but could not reduce that of the hearse. He drew closer to the grave-digger.

" There is such a capital Argenteuil wine," he muttered.

" Villager," the man replied, " I was not meant to be a grave-digger. My father was porter at the Prytanæum, and destined me for literature, but he was unfortunate in his speculations on the Exchange. Hence I was compelled to relinquish the profession of author, but I am still a public writer. I have my writer's stall at the market in the Rue de Sèvres—you know, the umbrella market ? All the cooks of the Croix Rouge apply to me, and I compose their declarations to the soldiers. In the morning I write billets-doux, in the evening I dig graves ; such is life, Rustic."

The hearse went on, and Fauchelevent looked all about him with the greatest anxiety ; heavy drops of perspiration fell from his forehead.

" Still," the grave-digger continued, " a man cannot serve two mistresses, and I must choose between the pick and the pen. The pick ruins my hand."

The hearse stopped ; the chorister got out of the coach, and then the priest. One of the small front wheels of the

hearse was slightly raised by a heap of earth, beyond which an open grave was visible.

Who was in the coffin? It was, as we know, Jean Valjean, who had so contrived as to be able to live in it, and could almost breathe. Never was a situation more critical. The death of Father Mestienne baffled the whole combination.

The four planks of a coffin exhale a species of terrible peace, and it seemed as if some of the repose of the dead were blended with Valjean's tranquillity. From the bottom of this coffin he had been able to follow all the phases of the formidable drama which he performed with death. A short while after Fauchelevent had finished nailing down the coffin lid, Valjean felt himself raised and then carried along. Through the cessation of the jolting he felt that they had passed from the pavement to the stamped earth, and had turned into the boulevards. From the hollow sound he guessed that he was crossing the Bridge of Austerlitz; at the first halt, he understood that he was entering the cemetery, and at the sound he said to himself,—"Here is the grave."

He suddenly felt hands seize the coffin, and then noticed a rumbling grating on the planks: he guessed that a rope was being fastened round the coffin in order to let it down into the grave. After this, he felt dizzy for a while; in all probability the men had made the coffin oscillate and let the head down before the feet. He perfectly recovered when he found himself horizontal and motionless. He felt a certain amount of cold, as a chill and solemn voice was raised above him, and he heard the Latin words, which he did not understand, pass away so slowly that he could distinguish each in turn.

Qui dormiunt in terræ pulvere evigilabunt; alii in vitam æternam, et alii in opprobrium, ut videant semper.

A boyish voice said,—*De profundis.*

The grave voice began again,—

Requiem æternam dona ei, Domine.

The boyish voice replied,—

Et lux perpetua luceat ei!

He heard something like the gentle plash of rain upon the coffin lid; it was, probably, the holy water. He thought, "It is finished; and I only need a little patience. The priest will go away, and Fauchelevent take Mestienne off to drink.

I shall be left here till Fauchelevent returns alone, and I shall get out. It will take about an hour."

The grave voice continued,—

Requiescat in pace.

And the boyish voice said,—

Amen.

Jean Valjean, who was listening attentively, heard something like the sound of retreating footsteps.

"They are going away," he thought. "I am alone." All at once he heard over his head a noise which appeared to him like a thunder-clap; it was a spade-full of earth falling on the coffin,—a second spade-full fell, and one of the holes by which he breathed was stopped,—a third shovel-full fell, and then a fourth. There are some things stronger than the strongest man, and Jean Valjean lost his senses.

When the hearse had gone away, Fauchelevent, who did not once take his eyes off the grave-digger, saw him stoop down and seize his spade, which was standing upright in the heap of earth. Fauchelevent formed a supreme resolution: he placed himself between the grave and the digger, folded his arms, and said,—

"Listen to me, mate; I am the convent grave-digger, and have come to help you. It is a job which can be done by night, so let us begin by going to have a drain. I offer to pay."

"When we have put the child to bed," said Gribier.

He threw a spade-full of earth, and then added, as he dug the shovel into the ground,

"It will be very cold to-night! and the dead woman would hallo after us if we were to leave her here without a blanket."

At this moment the grave-digger stooped to fill his spade, and his jacket pocket gaped. Fauchelevent's wandering glance fell mechanically into his pocket. The sun was not yet hidden by the horizon, and there was still sufficient light to distinguish something white at the bottom of this gaping pocket.

Unnoticed by the grave-digger, he thrust his hand into it from behind, and drew out the white thing at the bottom. The grave-digger threw another shovel-full into the grave, and as he hurried to raise a third, Fauchelevent looked at him with profound calmness, and said,—

" By the way, my novice, have you your card ? The sun is just going to set."

" Ah, my card ! " the grave-digger said : and he felt in one pocket, and then in another.

" No," he said, " I must have forgotten it."

" Fifteen francs fine," said Fauchelevent.

The grave-digger turned green, for the pallor of livid men is green.

" O Lord, have mercy upon me," he exclaimed ; " fifteen francs fine ! "

The grave-digger let his shovel fall ; Fauchelevent's turn had arrived.

" Come, conscript," said the old gardener, " no despair ; you need not take advantage of the grave to commit suicide. Fifteen francs are fifteen francs, and besides, you can avoid paying them. I am up to all the tricks and dodges. I will give you a piece of friendly advice. One thing is clear, the sun is setting, it is touching the dome, and the cemetery will shut in five minutes, which will not be enough for you to fill up this grave, which is deuced deep, and reach the gates in time to get out before they close. Where do you live ? "

" Hardly a quarter of an hour's walk from here, at No. 87, Rue de Vaugirard."

" You have just time enough to get out, if you look sharp. Once outside the gates, you will gallop home and fetch your card, and when you return the porter will open the gate for you gratis. And you will bury your dead woman, whom I will stop from running away during your absence."

" I owe you my life, peasant."

" Be off at once," said Fauchelevent.

When he had disappeared behind a clump of trees, Fauchelevent listened till his footsteps died away, then bent over the grave, and said in a low voice,—" Father Madeleine ! "

There was no reply. Fauchelevent trembled : he tumbled all of a heap into the grave, took out his cold chisel and hammer, and prized off the coffin-lid. He could see Jean Valjean's face in the gloom, pale, and with the eyes closed. Fauchelevent murmured in a voice faint as a breath, " He is dead ! "

And drawing himself up, he folded his arms so violently that his clenched fists struck his shoulders, and cried, " That is the way in which I save him ! "

A shrill grating sound was audible at a distance through the trees: it was the closing of the cemetery gate. Fauchelevent bent over Jean Valjean, and all at once bounded back to the further end of the grave—Jean Valjean's eyes were open and staring at him.

Fauchelevent became like stone. He was pale, haggard, confounded by such excessive emotion, not knowing if he had to do with a dead man or a living man, and looking at Jean Valjean, who looked at him.

Jean Valjean had only fainted, and the fresh air aroused him again. Joy is the reflux of terror, and Fauchelevent had almost as much difficulty in recovering himself as had Jean Valjean.

"I am cold," said Valjean.

"Let us get out of this at once," said Fauchelevent.

He felt in his pocket, and produced a flask.

"But a dram first," he said.

The flask completed what the fresh air had begun. Valjean drank a mouthful of spirits and regained perfect possession of himself. He got out of the coffin, and helped Fauchelevent to nail on the lid again: three minutes later they were out of the grave.

When the grave was filled up, Fauchelevent said,—

"Come along: you carry the pick, and I will carry the spade."

They went along the avenues by which the hearse had passed, and, on reaching the gate, Fauchelevent threw the grave-digger's card into the box; the porter pulled the string, and they went out.

"How famously it has all gone," said Fauchelevent; "it was an excellent idea you had, Father Madeleine!"

On the morrow two bells were heard in the convent garden, and the nuns could not resist the temptation of raising a corner of their veils. They could see under the shade of the trees two men digging side by side, Fauvent and another. It was an enormous event, and silence was so far broken that they whispered, "It is an assistant gardener, a brother of Father Fauvent's."

Jean Valjean was in fact permanently installed; he had the leathern knee-cap and bell, and was henceforth official. He called himself Ultime Fauchelevent.

Cosette became a boarder at the convent, and was obliged to assume the garb of the pupils of the house. Jean Valjean begged and obtained the old clothes she left off; the same mourning clothes he made her put on when he removed her from the Thénardiers', and they were not much worn. Jean Valjean placed these clothes and her shoes and stockings, with a quantity of camphor and other odorous drugs with which convents abound, in a small valise which he managed to procure. He placed this valise on a chair by his bed-side, and always had the key about him.

The nuns did not adopt the name of Ultime; they called Jean Valjean "the other Fauvent." Had these holy women had any of Javert's temper about them, they must have noticed that when anything had to be procured from outside for the garden it was always the elder Fauvent, the cripple, who went out, and never the other; but either because eyes constantly fixed on GOD know not how to spy, or because they preferred to watch one another, they paid no attention to the fact. However, Jean Valjean did quite right in keeping shy and not stirring, for Javert watched the quarter for a whole month.

Cosette had permission to spend an hour daily with Valjean, and as the sisters were sad and he was kind, the child compared them and adored him. At the fixed hour she ran to the cottage, and when she entered it filled it with paradise. In her hours of recreation Jean Valjean watched her from a distance, playing and running, and distinguished her laugh from that of the others, for Cosette now laughed. Her face had also changed to a certain extent, for laughter is the sun which drives winter from the human face. When Cosette returned to her studies Jean Valjean watched the windows of her school-room, and at night would rise to gaze at the windows of her dormitory.

All that surrounded him, this peaceful garden, these fragrant flowers, these children uttering merry cries, these grave and simple women, these silent cloisters, slowly penetrated him, and gradually his soul was composed of silence like this cloister, of perfume like these flowers, of peace like this garden, of simplicity like these women, and of joy like these children. And then he thought how two houses of GOD had in turn received him at the two critical moments of his life,

the first when all doors were closed and human society repulsed him, the second at the moment when human society was beginning to hunt him down again, and the hulks were yawning for him; and that, had it not been for the former, he would have fallen back into crime, and but for the latter, into punishment. All his heart melted into gratitude, and he loved more and more.

Several years passed thus, and Cosette grew.

CHAPTER XI

Eight or nine years after the events recorded in the recent portion of this story, there might be noticed on the Boulevard du Temple and in the regions of the Château d'Eau, a boy of about eleven or twelve years of age. This child was dressed in a man's trousers, but he had not got them from his father, and a woman's jacket, which did not come from his mother. Some persons had clothed him in rags out of charity. Yet he had a father and a mother, but his father did not think of him, and his mother did not love him. He was one of those children worthy of pity before all, who have father and mother, and are orphans.

This child was never so comfortable anywhere as in the street, for the paving-stones were less hard to him than his mother's heart. His parents had kicked him out into life, and he had simply tried his wings. He was a noisy, pale, active, sharp, impudent lad, with a cunning and sickly look. He came and went, sang, played at hopscotch, searched the gutters pilfered a little, but gaily, like cats and sparrows, laughed when he was called a scamp, and felt angry when called a thief. He had no bed, no bread, no fire, no love; but he was happy because he was free.

Still, so abandoned as this child was, it happened every two or three months that he said,—"Well, I'll go and see mamma." Then he quitted the Boulevard, the Circus, the Porte St. Martin, went along the quay, crossed the bridge, reached the Salpetrière, and arrived where? Exactly at that double No. 50-52, which the reader knows, the Maison Gorbeau. At this period No. 50-52, which was habitually deserted and eternally decorated with a bill of "Lodgings to Let," was, strange to say, inhabited by several persons, who

had no acquaintance with each other, as is always the case in Paris. All belonged to that indigent class which begins with the last small tradesman in difficulties, and is prolonged, from wretchedness to wretchedness, to those two beings to whom all the material things of civilization descend, the scavenger and the rag-picker.

The chief lodger of Jean Valjean's day was dead, and her place had been taken by another exactly like her. This new old woman was called Madame Burgon, and had nothing remarkable in her life save a dynasty of three parrots, which had successively reigned over her soul. The most wretched of all the persons inhabiting the house were a family of four persons, father, mother, and two nearly grown-up daughters, all four living in the same attic, one of the cells to which we have alluded.

This family offered at the first glance nothing very peculiar beyond its denudation; and the father, on hiring the room, stated that his name was Jondrette. A short time after he moved in, which had borne a striking resemblance—to employ the memorable remark of the chief lodger—to the coming in of nothing at all, this Jondrette had said to the woman, who, like her predecessor, was also porteress and swept the stairs, "Mother So and So, if any one were to ask by chance for a Pole, or an Italian, or perhaps a Spaniard, I am the party."

This was the family of the merry little vagabond. He joined it, and found distress, and, what is sadder still, not a smile; a cold hearth and cold heart. When he entered, they asked him, "Where do you come from?" and he answered, "From the street:" when he went away, "Where are you going?" and he answered, "To the street."

On the boulevard the lad was called Little Gavroche. Why was he called Gavroche? Probably, because his father's name was Jondrette. Breaking the thread seems the instinct of some wretched families. The room which the Jondrettes occupied at the Maison Gorbeau was the last in the passage, and the cell next to it was occupied by a very poor young man of the name of Monsieur Marius. Let us state who this Monsieur Marius was.

There are still a few persons residing in the Rue Boucherat, Rue de Normandie, and Rue de Saintonge, who can re

member a gentleman of the name of M. Gillenormand, and speak kindly about him. This man was old when they were young, and this profile has not entirely disappeared, with those who look sadly at the vague congregation of shadows called the past, from the labyrinth of streets near the Temple, which, in the reign of Louis XIV., received the names of all the provinces of France, exactly in the same way as in our time the names of all the capitals of Europe have been given to the streets in the new Tivoli quarter; a progression, by the bye, in which progress is visible.

M. Gillenormand, who was most lively in 1831, was one of those men who have become curious to look on, solely because they have lived a long time. He was a peculiar old man, the complete and rather haughty bourgeois of the eighteenth century, who carried his honest old bourgeoisie with the same air as Marquises did their marquisate. He had passed his ninetieth year, walked upright, talked loudly, saw clearly, and drank heartily. He still had his two-and-thirty teeth, and only wore spectacles to read with. He was of an amorous temper, but said that for the last ten years he had decidedly and entirely given up the sex. "He could not please," he said: and he did not add "I am too old," but "I am too poor. If I were not ruined—he, he, he!" In fact, all that was left him was an income of about fifteen thousand francs. His dream was to make a large inheritance, and have one hundred thousand francs a year, in order to keep mistresses. As we see, he did not belong to that weak variety of octogenarians, who, like M. de Voltaire, were dying all their life; his longevity was not that of the cracked jug, and this jolly old gentleman had constantly enjoyed good health. He was superficial, rapidly and easily angered, and he would storm at the slightest thing, most usually an absurd trifle. When he was contradicted, he raised his cane, and thrashed his people, as folk used to do in the great age. He had a daughter, upwards of fifty years of age and unmarried, whom he gave a hearty thrashing to when he was in a passion, and whom he would have liked to whip, for he fancied her eight years of age.

He lived in the Marais, at No. 6, Rue des Filles de Calvaire, and the house belonged to him. He occupied an old and vast suite of rooms on the first floor, furnished up to the ceiling with large Gobelins and Beauvais tapestry, represent-

ing shepherd scenes. He surrounded his bed with an immense screen of Coromandel lacquer work; long curtains hung from the windows, and made very splendid, large, broken folds. The garden immediately under the windows was reached by a flight of twelve or fifteen steps running from one of them, which the old gentleman went up and down very nimbly. In addition to a library adjoining his bedroom, he had a boudoir, which he was very fond of, a gallant withdrawing-room, hung with a magnificent fleur-de-lysed tapestry, made in the galleys of Louis XIV., which M. de Vivonne had ordered of his convicts for his mistress. M. Gillenormand inherited this from a stern maternal great-aunt, who died at the age of one hundred. He had had two wives. His manners were midway between those of the courtier, which he had never been, and of the barrister, which he might have been. He was gay and pleasing when he liked; in his youth he had been one of those men who are always deceived by their wives, and never by their mistresses, because they are at once the most disagreeable husbands and the most charming lovers imaginable. Even in his old age he had the reputation of being a gay fellow. One day, a big baby, wrapped in rags, was brought to him in a basket, which a maid-servant, named la Magnon, whom he had discharged, attributed to him. M. Gillenormand was then in his eighty-fourth year, and though people around him were indignant, he did not feel at all angry, and had the child, a boy, taken care of. When Magnon sent him a second parcel next year, also a boy, he sent the two brats to their mother, agreeing to pay eighty francs a month for their support, but on condition that she was not to begin again, and that they should be well-treated.

Such was M. Luc Esprit Gillenormand, who had not lost his hair, which was rather grey than white, and always wore it in dog's ears. Altogether he was venerable, and contained both the frivolity and grandeur of the eighteenth century.

M. Gillenormand had had two daughters, born at an interval of ten years. The younger was a charming creature, who turned to the light, loved flowers, poetry, and music, was enthusiastical, ethereal, and mentally betrothed from her youth up to some heroic figure. The elder had her chimera too; she saw in the azure a contractor, some fat and

very rich man, a splendidly stupid husband, a million converted into a man, or else a prefect. The two sisters wandered each in her own reverie, at the period when they were girls, and both had wings, the one those of an angel, the other those of a goose.

No ambition is fully realized, at least not in this nether world, and no paradise becomes earthly in our age. The younger married the man of her dreams, but she was dead, while the elder did not marry. At the period when she enters into our narrative, she was an old virtue, an incombustible pride, with one of the most acute noses and most obtuse intellects imaginable. It is a characteristic fact that beyond her family, no one had ever known her family name; she was called Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder. In the matter of cant, Mademoiselle Gillenormand could have given points to a Miss, and she was modesty carried to the verge of blackness. She had one frightful reminiscence in her life —one day a man saw her garter.

Age had only heightened this pitiless modesty,—her chemisette was never sufficiently opaque, and never was high enough. She multiplied brooches and pins at places where no one dreamed of looking. The peculiarity of prudery is to station the more sentries the less the fortress is menaced. Still, let who will explain these old mysteries of innocence, she allowed herself to be kissed without displeasure by an officer in the Lancers, who was her grand-nephew, and Théodule by name. In spite of this favoured Lancer, however, the ticket of "Prude" which we have set upon her, suited her exactly. Mademoiselle Gillenormand's was a species of twilight soul, and prudery is a semi-virtue, and a semi-vice. She added to prudery the congenial lining of bigotry; she belonged to the Sisterhood of the Virgin, wore a white veil on certain saints' days, muttered special orisons, revered "the holy blood," venerated "the sacred heart," remained for hours in contemplation before a rococo Jesuit altar in a closed chapel, and allowed her soul to soar among the little marble clouds and through the large beams of gilt wood.

She had a chapel friend, an old maid like herself, of the name of Mlle Vaubois, absolutely imbecile, and by whose side Mlle Gillenormand had the pleasure of being an eagle Beyond Agnus Deis and Ave Marias, Mlle Vaubois knew no-

thing except the different ways of making preserves. Perfect of her genius, she was the ermine of stupidity, without a single spot of intelligence. We must add that Mlle Gillenormand rather gained than lost by growing old. She had never been wicked, which is a relative goodness; and then years abrade angles. She kept house for her father; such families, consisting of an old man and an old maid, are not rare, and have the ever touching appearance of two weaknesses supporting each other.

There was also in this house a child, a little boy, who was always trembling and dumb in the old gentleman's presence. M. Gillenormand never spoke to this boy except with a stern voice, and at times with up-raised cane. "Come here, sir,—scamp, scoundrel, come here,—answer me, fellow,—let me see you, vagabond!" etc. etc. He adored him; it was his grandson, and we shall meet him again.

M. Gillenormand had formerly lived in the Rue Sirvandoni, at which time he frequented several very good salons. Although a bourgeois, M. Gillenormand was welcome in them. About 1817, he invariably spent two afternoons a week at the house of the Baronne de T——, a worthy and respectable person, whose husband had been, under Louis XVI., Ambassador to Berlin. The Baron de T——, who, when alive, was passionately devoted to magnetic ecstasies and visions, died abroad a ruined man, leaving as his sole fortune ten MS. volumes bound in red morocco and gilt-edged, which contained very curious memoirs about Mesmer and his trough. Madame de T—— did not publish these memoirs through dignity, and lived on a small annuity, which survived no one knew how. Madame de T—— lived away from Court, "which was a very mixed society," as she said, in noble, proud, and poor isolation. Some friends collected twice a week round her widow's fire, and this constituted a pure Royalist salon. Tea was drunk, and people uttered there, according as the wind blew to elegiacs or dithyrambics, groans or cries of horror, about the age, the charter, the Bonapartists, the prostitution of the Cordon Bleu to untitled persons, and the Jacobinism of Louis XVIII.; and they also whispered about the hopes which Monsieur, afterwards Charles X., produced. M. Gillenormand was generally accompanied by his daughter, a tall young lady, who at that time was forty, and looked fifty; and by a

pretty boy of nine years of age, red and white, fresh, with happy, confident eyes, who never appeared in this drawing-room without hearing all the voices buzz around him,— "How pretty he is! what a pity, poor boy!" This lad was the one to whom we referred just now, and he was called "poor boy" because he had for father "a brigand of the Loire." This brigand was the son-in-law of M. Gillenormand, and the old gentleman called him the "disgrace of his family."

Any one who had passed at that period through the little town of Vernon, and walked on the handsome stone bridge, would have noticed, on looking over the parapet, a man of about fifty, wearing a leathern cap, and trousers and jacket of coarse grey cloth, to which something yellow, which had been a red ribbon, was sewn, with a face tanned by the sun, and almost black, and hair almost white, with a large scar on his forehead and running down his cheek, bowed and prematurely aged, walking almost every day, spade and pick in hand, in one of the walled enclosures near the bridge, which border, like a belt of terraces, the left bank of the Seine. There are delicious enclosures full of flowers, of which you might say, were they much larger, "they are gardens," and if they were a little smaller, "they are bouquets." All these enclosures join the river at one end, and a house at the other. The man in the jacket and wooden shoes, to whom we have alluded, occupied in 1817 the narrowest of these enclosures and the smallest of these houses. He lived there alone and solitary, silently and poorly, with a woman who was neither young nor old, neither pretty nor ugly, neither peasant nor bourgeoise, who waited on him. The square of land which he called his garden was celebrated in the town for the beauty of the flowers he cultivated, and they were his occupation.

From daybreak in summer he was in his walks, picking out, clipping, hoeing, watering, or moving among his flowers, with an air of kindness, sorrow, and gentleness. At times he would stand thoughtful and motionless for hours, listening to the song of a bird in a tree, the prattle of a child in a house, or else gazing at a drop of dew on a blade of grass, which the sun converted into a carbuncle. He lived very poorly, and drank more milk than wine; a child made him give way, and his servant scolded him. He was timid to such an extent that he seemed stern, went out rarely, and saw no one but

the poor, who tapped at his window, and his curé, Abbé Mabœuf, a good old man. Still, if the inhabitants of the town or strangers, curious to see his roses or tulips, came and tapped at his little door, he opened it with a smile. He was the brigand of the Loire.

Any one who, at the same time, read military Memoirs and Biographies, the *Moniteur* and the bulletins of the great army, might have been struck by a name which pretty often turns up, that of George Pontmercy. Pontmercy fought at Spires, Worms, Neustadt, Turkheim, Alzey, and at Mayence, where he was one of the two hundred who formed Houchard's rear-guard. He distinguished himself at Austerlitz in that admirable march in columns of companies performed under the enemy's fire; and when the Russian Imperial Horse Guards destroyed one of the battalions of the 4th line Infantry, Pontmercy was among those who took their revenge, and drove back these Guards. For this the Emperor gave him the Cross. Pontmercy saw in turn Wurmser made prisoner at Mantua, Mélas at Alessandria, and Mack at Ulm, and he belonged to the eighth corps of the grand army which Mortier commanded, and which took Hamburg. Then he joined the 55th regiment of the line, which was the old regiment of Flanders; at Eylau, he was in the cemetery where the heroic Captain Louis Hugo, uncle of the author of this book, withstood, with his company of eighty-three men, for two hours, the whole effort of the enemy's army. Pontmercy was one of the three who left this cemetery alive. He was at Friedland; then he saw Moscow, the Beresina, Lutzen, Bautzen, Dresden, Wacha, Leipsic, and the defiles of Gelnhausen; then at Montmereil, Château-Thierry, Craon, the banks of the Marne, the banks of the Aisne, and the formidable position of Laon. At Arnay le Duc, as captain, he sabred ten Cossacks, and saved, not his general, but his corporal; he was cut to pieces on this occasion, and seven-and-twenty splinters were taken out of his left arm alone. Eight days before the capitulation of Paris he exchanged with a comrade and entered the cavalry; for he had what was called under the old régime a "double hand," that is to say, an equal aptitude in handling, as private, a sabre or musket, as officer, a squadron or a company. From this aptitude, improved by military education, special arms sprang, for in-

stance, the dragoons, who are at once cavalry and infantry. He accompanied Napoleon to Elba, and at Waterloo was a Major of cuirassiers in Dubois' brigade. It was he who took the colours of the Limburg battalion, and himself threw them at the Emperor's feet. He was covered with blood, for, on seizing the colours, he received a sabre cut across the face. The Emperor, who was pleased, cried out to him, "You are a Colonel, a Baron, and officer of the Legion of Honour!" Pontmercy answered,—"Sire, I thank you on behalf of my widow." An hour later he fell into the ravine of Ohain. And now who was this George Pontmercy? He was the same brigand of the Loire.

We have already seen some portion of his history. After Waterloo, Pontmercy, drawn as we remember out of the hollow way of Ohain, succeeded in rejoining the army, and dragged himself from ambulance to ambulance as far as the cantonments of the Loire. The Restoration put him on half pay, and then sent him to Vernon, under honourable surveillance. King Louis XVIII., regarding all that was done in the Hundred Days as if it had not happened, recognized neither his quality as officer of the Legion of Honour, nor his commission as Colonel, nor his title as Baron. He for his part neglected no opportunity to sign himself, "Colonel Baron de Pontmercy." He had only one old blue coat, and never went out without attaching to it the rosette of the Legion of Honour. The King's attorney advised him that he would be tried for illegally wearing this decoration, and when this hint was given him by an officious intermediator, Pontmercy replied, with a bitter smile, "I do not know whether it is that I no longer understand French, or whether you are not speaking it, but the fact remains the same. I do not understand you." Then he went out for eight days in succession with his rosette, and the authorities did not venture to interfere with him. Twice or thrice the Minister of War, or the General commanding the department, wrote to him with the following superscription; "M. le Commandant Pontmercy," and he sent back the letters unopened. At the same moment Napoleon at St. Helena was treating in the same fashion the missives of Sir Hudson Lowe, addressed to "General Bonaparte."

He had nothing but his scanty half-pay as Major, and he

had taken the smallest house in Vernon, where he lived alone, in what way, we have just seen. Under the Empire, and between two wars, he found time to marry Mademoiselle Gillenormand. The old bourgeois, who was indignant in his heart, concluded with a sigh and saying, "The greatest families are forced into it." In 1815, Madame Pontmercy, a most admirable woman in every respect, and worthy of her husband, died, leaving a child. This child would have been the Colonel's delight in his solitude, but the grandfather imperiously claimed him, declaring that if he were not given up to him he would disinherit him. The father yielded for the sake of the little one, and, unable to love his son, he took to loving flowers.

M. Gillenormand kept up no relations with his son-in-law; the Colonel was to him a "bandit," and he was for the Colonel an "ass." It was expressly stipulated that Pontmercy should never attempt to see his son or speak to him, under penalty of having him thrown on his hands disinherited. The Colonel perhaps did wrong in accepting these terms, but he endured them, in the belief that he was acting rightly, and only sacrificing himself.

The inheritance of the grandfather was a small matter, but that of Mlle Gillenormand the elder was considerable, for this aunt was very rich on her mother's side, and her sister's son was her natural heir. The boy, who was called Marius, knew that he had a father, nothing more, and no one opened his lips to him on the subject. Still, in the society to which his grandfather took him, the whisperings and winks eventually produced light in the boy's mind, and he gradually came to think of his father only with shame.

While he was thus growing up in this way, the Colonel every two or three months came furtively to Paris, like a convict who is breaking his ban, and posted himself at St. Sulpice, at the hour when Aunt Gillenormand took Marius to Mass. Trembling lest the aunt should turn round, concealed behind a pillar, motionless, and scarce daring to breathe, he looked at this boy—the scarred warrior was frightened at this old maid.

From this very circumstance emanated his friendship with the Abbé Mabœuf, Curé of Vernon. This worthy priest had a brother, churchwarden of St. Sulpice, who had several times

noticed this man contemplating his child, and the scar on his cheek, and the heavy tear in his eye. One day when he went to Vernon to see his brother he met on the bridge Colonel Pontmercy, and recognized his man of St. Sulpice. The churchwarden told the affair to the Curé, and both made some excuse to pay a visit to the Colonel, from whom the Curé and the churchwarden learnt the whole story, and how Pontmercy sacrificed his own happiness to the future of his child. The result was that the Curé felt a veneration and tenderness for him, and the Colonel, on his side, took the Curé into his affection.

Twice a year, on January 1st, and St. George's day, Marius wrote his father letters dictated by his aunt, and the father sent very affectionate replies, which the grandfather thrust into his pocket without reading.

Marius Pontmercy, like most children, received some sort of education. When he left the hands of Aunt Gillenormand, his grandfather intrusted him to a worthy professor of the finest classical innocence. This young mind, just expanding, passed from a prude to a pedant. Marius spent some years at college, and then joined the Law-school; he was royalist, fanatic, and austere. He loved but little his grandfather, whose gaiety and cynicism ruffled him, and he was gloomy as regarded his father. In other respects, he was an ardent yet cold, noble, generous, proud, religious, and exalted youth; worthy almost to harshness, and fierce almost to savageness.

The conclusion of Marius' classical studies coincided with M. Gillenormand's retirement from society; the old gentleman bade farewell to the Faubourg St. Germain and Madame de T.'s drawing-room, and withdrew to his house in the Marais. His servants were, in addition to the porter, one Nicolette, who succeeded Magnon, and a wheezing, short-winded fellow whom he called Basque. In 1827 Marius attained his seventeenth year; on coming home one evening he saw his grandfather holding a letter in his hand.

"Marius," said M. Gillenormand, "you will start to-morrow for Vernon."

"What for?" Marius asked.

"To see your father."

Marius trembled, for he had thought of everything excepting this, that he might one day be obliged to see his father.

Nothing could be more unexpected, more disagreeable for him. Marius, in addition to his motives of political antipathy, was convinced that his father, the trooper, as M. Gillenormand called him in his good-tempered days, did not love him; that was evident, as he had abandoned him thus, and left him to others. Not feeling himself beloved, he did not love. He was so stupefied that he did not question his grandfather, but M. Gillenormand continued,—

"It seems that he is ill, and asks for you. I believe there is a coach which leaves at six o'clock, and gets to Vernon at nightfall. Go by it, for he says that the matter presses."

Then he crumpled up the letter, and put it into his pocket. Marius could have started the same night, and have been with his father the next morning; a diligence at that time used to run at night to Rouen, passing through Vernon. But neither M. Gillenormand nor Marius dreamed of inquiring. On the evening of the following day Marius arrived at Vernon, and asked the first passer-by for the house of "Monsieur Pontmercy." For in his mind he was of the same opinion as the Restoration, and did not recognize either his father's Barony or Colonelcy. The house was shown him; he rang, and a woman holding a small hand-lamp opened the door for him.

"Monsieur Pontmercy?" Marius asked.

The woman stood motionless.

"Is this his house?" Marius continued.

The woman shook her head in the affirmative.

"Can I speak to him?"

The woman made a negative sign.

"Why, I am his son," Marius added; "and he expects me."

"He no longer expects you," the woman said.

Then he noticed that she was crying; she pointed to the door of a parlour, and he went in. In this room, which was lighted by a tallow candle placed on the mantel-piece, there were three men, one standing, one on his knees, and one lying full length upon the floor in his shirt. The one on the floor was the Colonel; the other two were a physician and a priest praying. The Colonel had been attacked by a brain fever three days before, and having a foreboding of evil, he wrote to M. Gillenormand, asking for his son. The illness grew worse, and on the evening of Marius' arrival at Vernon, the

Colonel had an attack of delirium. He leaped out of bed, in spite of the maid-servant, crying, "My son does not arrive, I will go to meet him." Then he left his bed-room, and fell on the floor of the ante-room;—he had just expired. The physician and the curé were sent for, but both arrived too late; the son too had also arrived too late. By the twilight gleam of the candle, a heavy tear, which had fallen from the Colonel's dead eye, could be noticed on his pallid cheek. The eye was lustreless, but the tear had not dried up. This tear was his son's delay.

Marius gazed upon this man whom he saw for the first time and the last, upon this venerable and manly face, these open eyes which no longer saw, this white hair and the robust limbs upon which could be distinguished here and there brown lines, which were sabre cuts, and red stars, which were bullet holes. He gazed at the gigantic scar which imprinted heroism on this face, upon which GOD had imprinted gentleness. He thought that this man was his father, and that this man was dead, and he remained cold. The sorrow he felt was such as he would have felt in the presence of any other man whom he might have seen lying dead before him.

The Colonel left nothing, and the sale of the furniture scarce covered the funeral expenses. The maid-servant found a scrap of paper, which she handed to Marius. On it were the following lines, written by the Colonel:—

"*For my son.* The Emperor made me a Baron on the field of Waterloo, and as the Restoration contests this title, which I purchased with my blood, my son will assume it and wear it. Of course he will be worthy of it." On the back the Colonel had added, "At this same battle of Waterloo a sergeant saved my life, his name is Thénardier, and I believe that he has recently kept a small inn in a village near Paris, either Chelles or Montfermeil. If my son meet this Thénardier, he will do all he can for him."

Not through any affection for his father, but owing to that vague respect for death which is ever so imperious in the heart of man, Marius took this paper and put it away. Nothing was left of the Colonel. M. Gillenormand had his sword and uniform sold to the Jews; the neighbours plundered the garden, and carried off the rare flowers, while the others became brambles and died. Marius only remained

forty-eight hours in Vernon. After the funeral he returned to Paris and his legal studies, thinking no more of his father than if he had never existed. In two days the Colonel was buried, and in three forgotten.

Marius had a crape on his hat, and that was all.

Marius had retained the religious habits of his childhood. One Sunday, when he went to hear Mass at St. Sulpice, in the same Lady's Chapel to which his aunt took him when a boy, being on that day more than usually absent and thoughtful, he placed himself behind a pillar, and knelt, without paying attention to the fact, upon a Utrecht velvet chair, on the back of which was written, "Monsieur Mabœuf, Churchwarden." The Mass had scarce begun when an old gentleman presented himself, and said to Marius,—

"This is my place, sir."

Marius at once stepped aside, and the old gentleman took his seat. When Mass was ended Marius stood pensively for a few moments, till the old gentleman came up to him and said,—

"I ask your pardon, sir, for having disturbed you just now, and for troubling you afresh at this moment, but you must have considered me ill-bred, and so I wish to explain the matter to you."

"It is unnecessary, sir," said Marius.

"No, it is not," the old man continued, "for I do not wish you to have a bad opinion of me. I am attached to this seat, and it seems to me that the Mass is better here, and I will tell you my reason. To this spot I saw during ten years, at regular intervals of two or three months, a poor worthy father come who had no other opportunity or way of seeing his son, because they were separated through family arrangements. He came at the hour when he knew that his son would be brought to Mass. The boy did not suspect that his father was here—perhaps did not know that he had a father. The latter kept behind a pillar, so that he might not be seen, looked at his child and wept. This spot has become, so to speak, sanctified for me. I prefer it to the bench to which I should have a right as Churchwarden. I even knew the unfortunate gentleman slightly. He had a father-in-law, a rich aunt, and other relatives, who threatened to disinherit the boy if the father ever saw him, and he sacrificed himself that his son might one day be rich and happy. They were

separated through political opinions, and though I certainly approve of such opinions, there are persons who do not know where to stop. Good gracious ! because a man was at Waterloo he is not a monster ; a father should not be separated from his child on that account. He was one of Bonaparte's colonels, and is dead, I believe. He lived at Vernon, where I have a brother who is curé, and his name was something like Pontmarie, Montpercy—he had, on my word, a splendid sabre cut."

" Pontmercy," Marius said, turning pale.

" Precisely, Pontmercy ; did you know him ? "

" He was my father, sir."

The old churchwarden clasped his hands and exclaimed,—

" Ah ! you are the boy ! Well, poor boy, you may say that you had a father who loved you dearly."

Marius offered his arm to the old gentleman, and conducted him to his house. The next day he said to M. Gillenormand,—

" Some friends of mine have arranged a shooting party, will you allow me to go away for three days ? "

" Four," the grandfather answered, " go and amuse yourself ; " and he whispered to his daughter with a wink, " Some love affair ! "

Where Marius went we shall learn presently. He was away three days, then returned to Paris, went straight to the Library of the Law-school, and asked for a file of the *Moniteur*. He read it, he read all the histories of the Republic and the Empire. The first time he came across his father's name in a bulletin of the grand army he had a fever for a whole week. He called upon the generals under whom George Pontmercy had served ; among others, Count H—. The churchwarden, whom he saw again, told him of the life at Vernon, the Colonel's retirement, his flowers, and his solitude. Marius had at last a perfect knowledge of this rare, sublime, and gentle man, this species of lion-lamb—who had been his father.

While occupied with this study, which filled all his moments as well as all his thoughts, he scarce ever saw the Gillenormands. He appeared at meals, but when sought for after them he could not be found. His aunt sulked, but old Gillenormand smiled. " Stuff, stuff, it is the right age." At times the old man would add, " Confound it, I thought that it was an affair of gallantry, but it seems that it is a passion."

It was a passion in truth, for Marius was beginning to adore his father.

At the same time an extraordinary change took place in his ideas. The history he had just read startled him, and the first effect was bedazzlement. He perceived, that up to this moment he had no more understood his country than he did his father—that the Republic, the Empire, had been to him but words. He was full of regret and remorse, and he thought with despair that he could only tell to a tomb all that he had in his mind. Oh, if his father were alive, how he would have cried to him, "Father, I have the same heart as you! I am your son!" Oh, why did this father die so soon, before justice had been done him, before he had known his son's love?

One night he was alone in his little garret, his candle was lighted, and he was reading at a table by the open window. All sorts of reveries reached him from the space, and were mingled with his thoughts. He was reading the bulletins of the grand army, those Homeric strophes written on the battlefield; he was transported, trembling, and gasping; and all alone, without knowing what was within him, he rose, stretched his arms out of the window, and shouted, "Long live the Emperor!"

The points of his moral compass were changed, and what had once been sunset was now sunrise; and all these revolutions took place in turns, without his family suspecting it. When, in this mysterious labour, he had entirely lost his old Bourbonic and ultra skin, when he had pulled off the aristocrat, the Jacobite, and the Royalist, when he was a perfect Revolutionist, profoundly democratic, and almost republican, he went to an engraver's and ordered one hundred cards, with the address "Baron Marius Pontmercy." This was but the logical consequence of the change which had taken place in him, a change in which everything gravitated round his father. Still, as he knew nobody, and could not show his cards at any porter's lodge, he put them in his pocket.

By another natural consequence, in proportion as he drew nearer to his father, his memory, and the things for which the Colonel had fought during five-and-twenty years, he drew away from his grandfather. M. Gillenormand's humour had not suited him for a long time past, and there already existed between them all the dissonances produced by the con-

tact of a grave young man with a frivolous old man. So long as the same political opinions and ideas had been common to them, Marius met his grandfather upon them as on a bridge, but when the bridge fell there was a great gulf between them; and then, before all else, Marius had indescribable attacks of revolt when he reflected that it was M. Gillenormand who, through stupid motives, pitilessly tore him from the Colonel, thus depriving father of son, and son of father. Through his reverence for his father, Marius had almost grown into an aversion from his grandfather.

Nothing of this, however, was revealed in his demeanour; he merely became colder than before, laconic at meals, and rarely at home.

In one of his trips, which were always very short, he went to Montfermeil in order to obey his father's intimation, and sought for the ex-sergeant of Waterloo, Thénardier, the landlord. Thénardier had failed, the public-house was shut up, and no one knew what had become of him. In making this search Marius remained away for four days.

"He is decidedly getting out of order," said the grandfather.

They also fancied they could notice that he wore under his shirt something fastened round his neck by a black ribbon.

We have alluded to a lancer: he was a great-grand-nephew of M. Gillenormand's, on the father's side, who led a garrison life, far away from the domestic hearth. Lieutenant Theodule Gillenormand fulfilled all the conditions required for a man to be a pretty officer; he had a young lady's waist, a victorious way of clanking his sabre, and turned-up moustaches. He came very rarely to Paris, so rarely that Marius had never seen him, and the two cousins only knew each other by name. Theodule was, we think we said, the favourite of Aunt Gillenormand, who preferred him because she never saw him; for not seeing people allows of every possible perfection being attributed to them.

One morning Mlle Gillenormand the elder returned to her apartments, as much affected as her general placidity would allow. Marius had again asked his grandfather's permission to make a short trip, adding that he wished to start that same evening. Mlle Gillenormand went up to her room greatly puzzled, and cast to the staircase this exclamation, "It's too much!" and this question, "But where is it that he goes?"

She caught a glimpse of some more or less illicit love adventure, and would not have felt vexed to have a closer peep at it through her spectacles. Scenting a mystery is like the first bite at a piece of scandal, and holy souls do not detest it. In order to distract this curiosity, which agitated her a little beyond her wont, she began festooning with cotton upon cotton one of those embroideries of the Empire and the Restoration, in which there are a great many cabriolet wheels. She had been sitting over it for some hours when the door opened. Mlle Gillenormand raised her nose, and saw Lieutenant Theodule before her, making his regulation salute. She uttered a cry of delight; for a woman may be old, a prude, devout, and an aunt, but she is always glad to see a lancer enter her room.

"You here, Theodule!" she exclaimed.

"In passing, my dear aunt."

"You will stop the week out?"

"My dear aunt, I am off again to-night."

"Stay, my little Theodule, I beg of you."

"The heart says Yes, duty says No. We are changing garrison; we are sent to Gaillon. We were obliged to pass through Paris, and I said to myself, 'I will go and see my aunt.'"

"And here's for your trouble."

And she slipped ten louis into his hand.

Theodule kissed her, and she had the pleasure of having her neck slightly grazed by his gold-laced collar.

"By the way, it appears that my cousin Marius Pontmercy is going on a journey too?"

"How do you know that?" the aunt said, her curiosity being greatly tickled.

"On reaching Paris I went to the coach-office to take my place in the *coupé*. A traveller had already taken a seat in the Imperiale, and I saw his name in the way-bill: it was Marius Pontmercy."

"Oh, the scamp," the aunt exclaimed. "Ah! your cousin is not a steady lad like you. To think that he is going to pass the night in a diligence!"

Here an event occurred to Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder: she had an idea. If she had been a man, she would have struck her forehead. She addressed Theodule.

" You are aware that your cousin does not know you ? "

" I have seen him, but he never deigned to notice me."

" Listen, Theodule ; Marius absents himself from the house."

Theodule replied with the calmness of a bronze man, " Some petticoat ! "

" That is evident ! " the aunt exclaimed. " We should like to know the meaning of all this—to find out where he goes. Do us a pleasure by following Marius a little. As he does not know you, that will be an easy matter. Since there is a girl in the case, try to get a look at her, and write and tell us all about it, for it will amuse your grandfather."

Theodule had no excessive inclination for this sort of watching, but he was greatly affected by the ten louis, and he believed he could see a possible continuation of such gifts. He accepted the commission and said, " As you please, aunt," and added in an aside, " I am a Duenna now ! "

Marius, on the evening that followed this dialogue, got into the diligence, not suspecting that he was watched. As for the watcher, the first thing he did was to fall asleep, and his sleep was complete and conscientious. Argus snored the whole night. At day-break the guard shouted, " Vernon ; passengers for Vernon, get out here ! " and Lieutenant Theodule got out.

" All right," he growled, still half asleep, " I get out here."

Then his memory growing gradually clearer, he thought of his aunt, the ten louis, and the account he had promised to render of Marius' sayings and doings. This made him laugh.

At this moment the leg of a black trouser appeared against the window-pane of the *coupé*,—it was Marius. A little peasant girl was offering flowers to the passengers, and crying " Bouquets for your ladies." Marius went up to her, and bought the finest flowers in her basket.

" By Jove," said Theodule, as he leaped out of the *coupé*, " the affair is growing piquant, she must be a deucedly pretty woman to deserve so handsome a bouquet. I must have a look at her."

And then he began following Marius, no longer by order, but through personal curiosity. Marius paid no attention to Theodule. Some elegant women were getting out of the diligence, but he did not look at them ; he seemed to see nothing around him.

" He must be preciously in love," Theodule thought. Marius

proceeded toward the church. He did not go in, but disappeared behind one of the buttresses of the apse.

"The meeting outside," Theodule said; "now for a look at the girl."

And he walked on tip-toe up to the corner which Marius had gone round, and on reaching it stopped in stupefaction. Marius, with his forehead in both his hands, was kneeling in the grass upon a tomb, and had spread his flowers out over it. At the head of the grave was a cross of black wood, with this name in white letters,—"COLONEL BARON PONTMERCY." Marius could be heard sobbing. Theodule fell back in dismay—the girl was a tomb!

Marius returned from Vernon very early on the morning of the third day, and wearied by two nights spent in a diligence, and feeling the necessity of repairing his want of sleep by an hour at the swimming-school, he hurried up to his room, only took the time to take off his travelling coat and the black ribbon which he had round his neck, and went to the bath. M. Gillenormand, who rose at an early hour like all old men who are in good health, heard him come in, and hastened as quick as his old legs would carry him up the stairs leading to Marius' garret, in order to welcome him back, and try and discover his movements. When Father Gillenormand entered the garret Marius was no longer there. The bed had been unoccupied, and on it lay the coat and black ribbon unsuspectingly.

"I prefer that," said M. Gillenormand, and a moment later he entered the drawing-room, where Mlle Gillenormand the elder was already seated embroidering her cabriolet wheels. The entrance was triumphant, M. Gillenormand held in one hand the coat, in the other the neck-ribbon, and shouted,—

"Victory! we are going to penetrate the mystery. Here is the romance itself, for I have the portrait."

In fact, a box of shagreen leather, much like a miniature, was suspended from the ribbon. The old man took hold of this box, and looked at it for some time without opening.

"Let us look, father," the old maid said.

The box opened by pressing a spring, but they only found in it a carefully folded-up paper.

They unfolded it and read as follows,—

"*For my son.* The Emperor made me a Baron on the field of Waterloo, and as the Restoration contests this title which

I purchased with my blood, my son will assume it and wear it; of course he will be worthy of it."

What the father and daughter felt, it is not possible to describe; but they were chilled as if by the breath of a death's head. They did not exchange a syllable. M. Gillenormand merely said in a low voice, and as if speaking to himself, "It is that trooper's hand-writing."

At the same instant, a small square packet, wrapped up in blue paper, fell from a pocket of the great-coat. Mlle Gillenormand picked it up and opened the blue paper. It contained Marius's one hundred cards, and she passed one to M. Gillenormand, who read, "Baron Marius Pontmercy." The old man rang, and Nicolette came in. M. Gillenormand took the ribbon, the box, and the coat, threw them on the ground in the middle of the room, and said,—

"Remove that rubbish."

A long hour passed in the deepest silence; the old man and the old maid were sitting back to back and thinking, probably both of the same things. At the end of this hour, Mlle Gillenormand said,—"Very pretty!" A few minutes after, Marius came in; even before he crossed the threshold he perceived his grandfather holding one of his cards in his hand. On seeing Marius he exclaimed, with his air of bourgeois superiority, which had something crushing about it,—

"Stay! You are a Baron at present; I must congratulate you. What does this mean?"

Marius blushed slightly, and answered,—

"It means that I am my father's son."

M. Gillenormand left off laughing, and said harshly,—"I am your father."

"My father," Marius continued with downcast eyes and a stern air, "was an humble and heroic man, who gloriously served the Republic of France, died in forgetfulness and abandonment, and who had never committed but one fault, that of loving too dearly two ungrateful beings—his country and myself."

This was more than M. Gillenormand could bear.

"Marius," he shouted, "I know not who your father was, and do not wish to know. You must know that you are as much a Baron as my slipper is! They were all bandits who served Robespierre! they were all brigands who served B-u-onaparté! all traitors who betrayed their legitimate king! all

cowards who ran away from the Prussians and the English at Waterloo. That is what I know. If your father was among them, I am ignorant of the fact, and am sorry for it. I am your humble servant!"

Marius trembled all over, he knew not what to do, and his head was a-glow. It was impossible that such things could be said with impunity in his presence, but what was he to do? His father had just been trampled under foot, and insulted in his presence, but by whom? By his grandfather. How was he to avenge the one without outraging the other? On one side was a sacred tomb, on the other was white hair. He tottered for a few moments like a drunken man, then raised his eyes, looked fixedly at his grandfather, and shouted in a thundering voice,

"Down with the Bourbons, and that great pig of a Louis XVIII.!"

Louis XVIII. had been dead four years, but that made no difference to him. The old man, who had been scarlet, suddenly became whiter than his hair. He turned to a bust of the Duc de Berry which was on the mantel-piece, and bowed to it profoundly with a sort of singular majesty. Then he walked twice, slowly and silently, from the mantel-piece to the window, crossing the whole room, and making the boards creak as if he were a walking marble statue. The second time he leant over his daughter, and said to her with a smile which was almost calm,—

"A Baron like this gentleman, and a bourgeois like myself, can no longer remain beneath the same roof."

And suddenly drawing himself up, livid, trembling, and terrible, with his forehead dilated by the fearful radiance of passion, he stretched out his arm toward Marius, and shouted, "Begone!"

Marius left the house, and on the morrow M. Gillenormand said to his daughter,—

"You will send every six months sixty pistoles to that blood-drinker, and never mention his name to me."

Marius, on his side, left the house indignant, and a circumstance aggravated his exasperation. In hurriedly conveying, by the grandfather's order, Marius's rubbish to his bed-room, Nicolette, without noticing the fact, let fall, probably on the attic stairs, which were dark, the black shagreen case in which was the paper written by the Colonel. As neither could be

found, Marius felt convinced that "Monsieur Gillenormand"—he never called him otherwise from that date—had thrown "his father's will" into the fire. He knew by heart the few lines written by the Colonel, but the paper, the writing, this sacred relic,—all this was his heart. What had been done with it?

Marius went away without saying where he was going, and without knowing, with thirty francs, his watch, and some clothes in a carpet-bag. He jumped into a cabriolet, engaged it by the hour, and proceeded at all risks towards the Pays Latin. What would become of Marius?

CHAPTER XII

At this epoch, when a certain revolutionary quivering was vaguely felt, there was at Paris a society called the friends of the A. B. C., whose ostensible object was the education of children, but the real one the elevation of men. They assembled at two places; at a cabaret called *Corinthe* near the Halles, and near the Pantheon, in a small café on the Place St. Michel, known as the Café Musain, and now demolished: the first of these meeting-places was contiguous to the workmen, and the second to the students.

Most of the friends of the A. B. C. were students, who maintained a cordial understanding with a few workmen. Here are the names of the principal members, which belong in a certain measure to history,—Enjolras, Combeferre, Jean Prouvaire, Feuilly, Courfeyrac, Bahorel, Laigle de Meaux, Joly, and Grantaire. These young men formed a species of family through their friendship, and all came from the South, excepting Laigle. They all had the same religion,—Progress. They were all the direct sons of the French Revolution, and the lightest among them became serious when pronouncing the date of '89. Their fathers in the flesh were, or had been, feuillettants, royalists, or doctrinaires, but that was of little consequence; this pell-mell, anterior to themselves, who were young, did not concern them, and the pure blood of principles flowed in their veins; they attached themselves, without any intermediate tinge, to incorruptible right and absolute duty.

On a certain afternoon, which, as we shall see, has some coincidence with the events recorded above, Laigle de Meaux was sensually leaning against the door-post of the Café Musain.

Laigle, whose eyes were absently wandering, saw through this somnambulism a two-wheeled vehicle moving across the Place St. Michel at a foot-pace and apparently undecided. He looked at it, and saw inside a young man seated by the side of the driver, and in front of the man a carpet-bag. The bag displayed to passers-by this name, written in large black letters on the card sewn to the cloth, MARIUS PONTMERCY. This name made Laigle change his attitude: he drew himself up, and shouted to the young man in the cab, "M. Marius Pontmercy."

The cab stopped, on being thus hailed, and the young man, who also appeared to be thinking deeply, raised his eyes.

"Hilloh!" he said,—

"Are you M. Pontmercy?"

"Yes."

"I was looking for you," Laigle of Meaux continued. "You were not at lecture the day before yesterday!"

"Very possibly."

'It is certain."

"Are you a student?" Marius asked.

"Yes, sir, like yourself. The day before yesterday I entered the Law-school by chance; as you know, a man has an idea like that sometimes. The Professor was engaged in calling over, and you are aware how ridiculously strict they are in the school at the present moment. Upon the third call remaining unanswered, your name is erased from the list, and sixty francs are gone. It was Blondeau who was calling over. You know Blondeau scents the absent with delight. He craftily began with the letter P, and I did not listen, because I was not compromised by that letter. The roll-call went on capitally, there was no erasure, and Blondeau was sad. All at once he calls out, 'Marius Pontmercy.' No one answered, and so Blondeau, full of hope, repeats in a louder voice, 'Marius Pontmercy,' and takes up his pen. I have bowels, sir, and said to myself hurriedly, 'The name of a good fellow is going to be erased. Attention! he is not a proper student, a reading man, a pedantic sap strong in science, literature, theology, and philosophy. No, he is an honourable idler, who lounges about, cultivates the grisette, pays his court to the ladies, and is perhaps with my mistress at this moment. I must save him: death to Blondeau!' At this moment Blondeau dipped his pen into the

ink, looked round his audience, and repeated for the third time, 'Marius Pontmercy!' I answered, 'Here;' and so your name was not erased."

"Sir!" Marius exclaimed.

"And mine was," Laigle of Meaux added.

"I do not understand you," said Marius.

"And yet it was very simple. I was near the desk to answer, and near the door to bolt. The Professor looked at me with a certain fixedness, and suddenly Blondeau, who must be the crafty nose to which Boileau refers, leaps to the letter L, which is my letter, for I come from Meaux, and my name is Laigle."

"L'Aigle!" Marius interrupted, "what a glorious name."

"Blondeau arrives, sir, at that glorious name, and exclaims 'L'Aigle!'" I answer, 'Here!' Then Blondeau looks at me with the gentleness of a tiger, smiles, and says,—'If you are Pontmercy you are not Laigle,' a phrase which appears offensive to you, but which was only lugubrious for me. After saying this, he erased me."

Marius exclaimed,—

"I am really mortified, sir,—"

"Young man," said Laigle, "let this serve you as a lesson; in future be punctual."

"I offer you a thousand apologies."

"And do not run the risk of getting your neighbour erased."

"I am in despair—"

Laigle burst into a laugh.

"And I am enchanted. I was on the downward road to become a lawyer, and this erasure saves me. I renounce the triumphs of the bar. I will not defend the orphan or attack the widow. I have obtained my expulsion, and I am indebted to you for it, M. Pontmercy. I intend to pay you a solemn visit of thanks,—where do you live?"

"In this cab," said Marius.

"A sign of opulence," Laigle remarked calmly; "I congratulate you, for you have apartments at nine thousand francs a year."

At this moment Courfeyrac came out of the café. Marius smiled sadly.

"I have been in this lodging for two hours, and am eager to leave it, but I do not know where to go."

"Come home with me," Courfeyrac said to him.

"I ought to have the priority," Laigle observed, "but then I have no home."

"Hold your tongue, Bossuet," Courfeyrac remarked.

"Bossuet!" said Marius, "why, you told me your name was Laigle."

"Of Meaux," Laigle answered, "metaphorically, Bossuet."

Courfeyrac got into the cab.

"Hôtel de la Porte St. Jacques, driver," he said.

The same evening, Marius was installed in a room in this house, next door to Courfeyrac.

In a few days Marius was a friend of Courfeyrac, for youth is the season of prompt weddings and rapid cicatrisations. Marius by the side of Courfeyrac breathed freely, a great novelty for him. Courfeyrac asked him no questions, and did not even think of doing so, for at that age faces tell everything at once, and words are unnecessary. There are some young men of whose countenance you may say that they gossip. you look at them and know them. One morning, however, Courfeyrac suddenly asked him the question, —

"By the way, have you any political opinion?"

"Of course!" said Marius, almost offended by the question.

"What are you?"

"Bonapartist—democrat."

"The grey colour of the reassured mouse," Courfeyrac remarked.

On the next day he led Marius to the Café Musain, and whispered in his ear with a smile, "I must introduce you to the Revolution," and he led him to the room of the Friends of the A. B. C. He introduced him to his companions, saying in a low voice, "a pupil," which Marius did not at all comprehend. Marius had fallen into a mental wasps' nest, but though he was silent and grave, he was not the less winged and armed.

The collision of young minds has this admirable thing about it, that the spark can never be foreseen or the lightning divined. What will shoot forth presently? no one knows. The burst of laughter is heard, and at the next moment seriousness makes its entrance. A stern thought, which strangely issued from a clash of words, suddenly flashed through the medley in which Grantaire, Bahorel, Prouvaire, Bossuet, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac were blindly slashing and pointing. How is it that a

phrase suddenly springs up in conversation, and underlines itself at once in the attention of those who trace it ? As we have just said, no one knows. In the midst of the general conversation Bossuet concluded some remark he made to Combeferre with the date, " June 18, 1815, Waterloo."

At this name of Waterloo, Marius, who had been leaning over a glass of water, removed his hand from under his chin and began looking intently at the company.

" Pardieu ! " Courfeyrac exclaimed (*Parbleu* at this period was beginning to grow out of fashion). " That number eighteen is strange, and strikes me, for it is Bonaparte's fatal number. Place Louis before, and Brumaire behind, and you have the man's whole destiny, with this expressive peculiarity, that the beginning has its heel gybed by the end."

Enjolras, who had hitherto been dumb, now broke the silence, and said,—

" Courfeyrac, you mean that the crime is urged by the expiation."

This word *crime* exceeded the measure which Marius, who was already greatly affected by this sudden reference to Waterloo, could accept. He rose, walked slowly to the map of France hanging on the wall, on the bottom of which could be seen an island in a separate compartment ; he placed his finger on this and said,—

" Corsica, a small island, which made France very great."

This was the breath of frozen air ; all broke off, for they felt that something was about to begin. Bahorel, who had been engaged in an argument with Bossuet, gave it up in order to listen; and Enjolras, whose blue eye was fixed on no one, and seemed to be examining space, answered without looking at Marius,—

" France requires no Corsica to be great. France is great because she is France, *quia nominor leo.*"

Marius felt no desire to give way ; he turned to Enjolras, and his voice had a strange vibration, produced by his internal emotion.

" Heaven forbid that I should diminish France ; but it is not diminishing her to amalgamate Napoleon with her. Come, let us talk, I am a new-comer among you, but I confess that you astonish me. Where are we ? who are we ? who are you ? who am I ? Let us come to an understanding about the Emperor. I hear you call him Buonaparte, laying a stress

on the *u*, like the Royalists, but I must tell you that my grandfather does better still, for he says, 'Buonaparté.' I fancied you young men, but where do you keep your enthusiasm, and what do you do with it? If you will not have that great man, what great man would you have? He had everything, he was complete, and in his brain was the cube of human faculties. He made codes like Justinian, and dictated like Cæsar; his conversation blended the lightning of Pascal with the thunder of Tacitus; he made history and wrote it, and his bulletins are Iliads; he combined the figures of Newton with the metaphor of Mahomet. He left behind him in the East words great as the Pyramids, at Tilsit he taught majesty to Emperors, at the Academy of Sciences he answered Laplace, at the Council of State he held his own against Merlin, he gave a soul to the geometry of one and to the sophistry of others, for he was a legist with the lawyers, a sidereal with the astronomers. Like Cromwell, blowing out one of two candles, he went to the Temple to bargain for a curtain tassel; he saw everything, knew everything, but that did not prevent him from laughing heartily by the cradle of his new-born son. And, all at once, startled Europe listened, armies set out, parks of artillery rolled along, bridges of boats were thrown over rivers, clouds of cavalry galloped in the hurricane, and shouts, bugles, and the crashing of thrones could be heard all around. The frontiers of kingdoms oscillated on the map, the sound of a superhuman sword being drawn from its scabbard could be heard, and he was seen, standing erect on the horizon, with a gleam in his hand and a splendour in his eyes, opening in the thunder his two wings, the grand army and the old Guard. He was the archangel of war."

All were silent, and Enjolras hung his head. Silence always produces to some extent the effect of acquiescence. Marius, almost without drawing breath, continued with increased enthusiasm,—

"Let us be just, my friends! What a splendid destiny it is for a people to be the empire of such an Emperor, when that people is France, and adds its genius to the genius of that man! To appear and reign; to march and triumph; to have as bivouacs every capital; to select grenadiers and make kings of them; to decree the downfall of dynasties; to transfigure Europe at double quick step; to follow in one man Hannibal,

Cæsar, and Charlemagne; to be the people of a ruler who accompanies your every day-break with the brilliant announcement of a battle gained; to be aroused in the morning by the guns of the Invalides; to be the great nation, and give birth to the great army; to sound a Titanic flourish of trumpets through history; to conquer the world twice, by conquest and by amazement—all this is sublime, and what is there greater?"

"To be free," said Combeferre.

Marius in his turn hung his head. This simple and cold remark had traversed his epical effusion like a steel blade, and he felt it fainting away within him. When he raised his eyes, Combeferre was no longer present; probably satisfied with his reply to the apotheosis, he had left the room, and all, excepting Enjolras, had followed him. Enjolras, alone with Marius, was looking at him gravely. Marius, however, having slightly collected his ideas, did not confess himself defeated, and he was in all probability about to begin afresh upon Enjolras, when he suddenly heard some one singing on the staircase. It was Combeferre, and this is what he sung.

"Si César m'avait donné
La gloire et la guerre,
Et qu'il me fallût quitter
L'amour de ma mere,
Jedirais au grand César:
Reprends ton sceptre et ton char,
J'aime mieux ma mère, ô gué!
J'aime mieux ma mère!"

The tender and solemn accent with which Combeferre sang this couplet imparted to it a species of strange grandeur. Marius, with his eye pensively fixed on the ceiling, repeated almost mechanically "my mother?"

At this moment he felt Enjolras' hand on his shoulder.

"Citizen," he said to him, "my mother is the Republic."

This evening left a sad obscurity and a profound shock in the mind of Marius, and he felt what the earth probably feels when it is opened by the plough-share, that the grain may be deposited; it only feels the wound, and the joy of giving birth does not arrive till later.

Marius was gloomy; he had only just made himself a faith, and must he reject it again? He declared to himself that he would not: he resolved not to doubt, and began doubting in-

voluntarily. To stand between two religions, one of which you have not yet lost, and the other which you have not yet entered, is unendurable, and twilight only pleases bat-like souls. Marius had an open eye-ball, and wanted true light; and the semi-lustre of doubt hurt him. Whatever might be his desire to remain where he was and cling to it, he was invincibly constrained to continue, to advance, to think, to go further. Whither would this lead him? He feared lest, after taking so many steps which had drawn him near his father, he was now going to take steps which would carry him away from him. His discomfort increased with all the reflections that occurred to him, and an escarpment became formed around him. He agreed neither with his grandfather nor his friends; he was daring for the one and behindhand for the others; and he found himself doubly isolated, on the side of old age and on the side of youth. He did not go again to the Café Musain.

In the troubled state of his conscience he did not think at all of certain serious sides of existence, but the realities of life will not allow themselves to be forgotten, and so they suddenly came to jog his memory. One morning the landlord came into Marius's room, and said to him,—

"Monsieur Courfeyrac recommended you?"

"Yes."

"But I want my money."

"Ask Courfeyrac to come and speak to me," said Marius.

When Courfeyrac arrived the landlord left them, and Marius told his friend what he had not dreamed of telling him yet,—that he was, so to speak, alone in the world, and had no relations.

"What will become of you?" said Courfeyrac.

"I do not know," Marius answered.

"Have you any money?"

"Fifteen francs."

"Are you willing to borrow from me?"

"Never."

"Have you clothes or jewelry?"

"There they are."

"I know a second-hand clothesman who will take your overcoat and a pair of trousers, and also a jeweller who will buy your watch."

"All right."

"No, it is not all right; what will you do after? Do you know English or German?"

"No."

"All the worse."

"Why so?"

"Because a friend of mine, a publisher, is preparing a sort of Encyclopedia, for which you could have translated English or German articles. The pay is bad, but it is possible to live on it."

"I will learn English and German."

"And in the meanwhile?"

"I will eat my clothes and my watch."

The clothes-dealer was sent for, and gave twenty francs for the coat and trousers; next they went to the jeweller's, who bought the watch for forty-five francs.

"That's not so bad," said Marius to Courfeyrac, on returning to the hotel; "with my fifteen francs that makes eighty."

"And your bill here?" Courfeyrac observed.

"Oh, I forgot that," said Marius.

The landlord presented his bill, which Marius was bound to pay at once; it amounted to seventy francs.

"I have ten francs left," said Marius.

"The deuce," Courfeyrac replied; "you will spend five francs while learning English, and five while learning German. That will be swallowing a language very quickly, or a five-franc piece very slowly."

Aunt Gillenormand, who was not a bad-hearted woman in sad circumstances, discovered her nephew's abode; and one morning, when Marius returned from college, he found a letter from his aunt and the "sixty pistoles," that is to say, six hundred francs in gold, in a sealed-up box. Marius sent the thirty louis back to his aunt with a respectful note, in which he stated that he would be able in future to take care of himself—at that moment he had just three francs left. The aunt did not tell grand-papa of this refusal, through fear of raising his exasperation to the highest pitch; besides, had he not said, "Never mention that blood-drinker's name in my presence." Marius quitted the Hôtel of the Porte St. Jacques, as he did not wish to run into debt, and found lodgings at No. 50-52.

Life became severe for Marius. At the age when youth swells the heart with an imperial pride, he looked down more

than once at his worn-out boots, and knew the unjust shame and burning blushes of wretchedness. It is an admirable and terrible trial, from which the weak come forth infamous and the strong sublime. It is the crucible into which destiny throws a man whenever it wishes to have a scoundrel or a demi-god.

There was a time in Marius's life when he swept his own landing, when he bought a halfpenny-worth of Brie cheese of the fruiterer, when he waited till night-fall to go into the baker's and buy a loaf, which he carried stealthily to his garret as if he had stolen it. At times there might have been seen slipping into the butcher's shop at the corner, among the gossiping cooks who elbowed him, a young awkward man with books under his arm, who had a timid and furious air, who on entering removed his hat from his dripping forehead, made a deep bow to the astonished butcher's wife, another to the foreman, asked for a mutton chop, paid three or four pence, wrapped the chop in paper, placed it between two books under his arm, and went away. It was Marius, and on this chop, which he cooked himself, he lived for three days. Several times did Aunt Gillenormand make tentatives and send him the sixty pistoles, but Marius always returned them, saying that he wanted for nothing.

He was still in mourning for his father when the revolution we have described took place within him, and since then he had not left off black clothes, but the clothes left him. A day arrived when he had no coat, though his trousers would still pass muster. Courfeyrac, to whom he on his side rendered several services, gave him an old coat. For thirty sous Marius had it turned by some porter, and it became a new coat. But it was green, and Marius henceforth did not go out till nightfall, which caused his coat to appear black. As he still wished to be in mourning, he wrapped himself in the night.

Through all this he contrived to pass his examination. He was still supposed to inhabit Courfeyrac's rooms, which were decent, and where a certain number of legal tomes, supported by broken-backed volumes of novels, represented the library prescribed by the regulations. He had his letters addressed to Courfeyrac's lodgings. When Marius was called to the bar he informed his grandfather of the fact in a cold letter, which, however, was full of submission and respect. M. Gillenormand took the letter with a trembling hand, read it, tore it in four

parts, and threw them into the basket. Two or three days later, Mlle Gillenormand heard her father, who was alone in his room, talking aloud, which always happened when he was agitated. She listened and heard the old gentleman say, "If you were not an ass, you would know that you cannot be at the same time a Baron and a lawyer."

Marius occupied at No. 50-52, for the annual rent of thirty francs, a garret without a fire-place, which was called a "cabinet," and only contained the indispensable articles of furniture. For four hundred and fifty francs he was boarded, lodged, and served. His clothes cost him a hundred francs, his linen fifty, his washing fifty, but the whole did not exceed six hundred and fifty francs. He had fifty left, and was rich: at times he would lend ten francs to a friend, and Courfeyrac once actually borrowed sixty francs of him.

It had taken Marius years to reach this flourishing condition, years in which he underwent great struggles, but he had not failed to himself a single day. He gave himself the credit of never having owed a farthing to any one, for to him debt was the beginning of slavery. Sooner than borrow he did not eat, and he had known many days of fasting. Knowing that unless a man is careful, reduction of fortune may lead to baseness of soul, he jealously watched over his pride. In all his trials he felt encouraged by a secret force within him; for the soul helps the body, and at times raises it, and is the only bird that upholds its cage.

By the side of his father's name, another name was engraved on Marius's heart, that of Thénardier. He never separated the memory of this man from that of his father, and he associated them in his veneration. Marius had learnt at Montfermeil the ruin and bankruptcy of the unfortunate landlord, and since then had made extraordinary efforts to find his trail, and try to reach him in the frightful abyss of misery through which Thénardier had disappeared. Marius went everywhere. No one was able to give him the slightest information of Thénardier. His creditors had sought him too, with less love, but quite as much perseverance, and had been unable to lay hands on him. Marius accused and felt angry with himself for not succeeding in his search. He would have given one of his arms to find Thénardier, and his last drop of blood to save him from want; and his sweetest

and most magnificent dream was to see Thénardier, do him some service, and say to him,—" You do not know me, but I know you: I am here, dispose of me as you please."

At this period Marius was twenty years of age, and he had left his grandfather's house for three. He foolishly imagined that M. Gillenormand had never loved him, but in this Marius was mistaken. In his heart M. Gillenormand idolized Marius, and when the lad had disappeared he felt a black gap in his heart; he insisted upon his name not being mentioned, but regretted that he was so strictly obeyed. He had his hours of depression, for he missed Marius, and old men require affection as much as they do the sun to warm them. He lived in greater retirement than ever at the Marais; he was still gay and violent as of yore, but his gaiety had a convulsive harshness, as if it contained grief and passion, and his violence generally terminated with a sort of gentle and sombre depression. He would say to himself at times,—" Oh, if he were to come back, what a hearty box of the ears I would give him!"

While the old gentleman regretted, Marius applauded himself. He was glad that he had suffered, and was still suffering, for he did so for his father. His only way of resembling him, was to be valiant against indigence, as he had been brave against the enemy, and this was doubtless what the Colonel meant by the words, *He will be worthy of it*—words which Marius continued to bear, not on his chest, as the Colonel's letter had disappeared, but in his heart.

In the meanwhile, though, he was called to the bar, and whatever Father Gillenormand might think, he did not practise, for reverie had turned him away from oratory. It was a bore to flatter attorneys, attend regularly at the palace and seek for briefs. And why should he do so? He could live by writing. He saw no reason to change his means of existence; his obscure task was certain, he had but little labour over it, and he considered his income satisfactory. One of the publishers for whom he worked, M. Magimel, I think, offered to take him into his house, lodge him comfortably, find him regular work, and pay him one thousand five hundred francs a year. To be comfortably lodged and have one thousand five hundred francs a year! doubtless agreeable things, but then, to resign his liberty, to be a hired servant, a sort of

literary clerk! In the opinion of Marius, if he accepted, his position would become better and worse; he would gain comfort and lose dignity. So he declined the offer.

Marius lived in solitude; through the inclination he had to remain outside everything, he held aloof from the society presided over by Enjolras. They remained excellent friends, and read to help each other when the opportunity offered, but nothing more. Marius had two friends, one young Courfeyrac, the other, old M. Mabœuf, and he inclined to the latter. In the first place, he owed to him the revolution which had taken place in him, and his knowledge and love of his father. "He operated on me for the cataract," he would say. Certainly, this churchwarden had been decisive: but for all that, M. Mabœuf had only been in this affair the impassive agent of Providence. He had enlightened Marius accidentally and unconsciously, just as a candle does which some one brings into a room, but he had been the candle, and not the some one. As for the internal political revolution which had taken place in Marius, M. Mabœuf was entirely incapable of understanding, wishing, or deserving it.

M. Mabœuf was a botanist, and had written and published a "Flora of the Environs of Cauteretz," with coloured plates, a work of some merit, of which he possessed the plates, and sold it himself. He made a profit of about two thousand francs a year by the book, and that was nearly his whole fortune. Although poor, he had contrived by patience and privations, and with time, to form a valuable collection of all sorts of rare examples. He never went out without a book under his arm, and frequently returned with two. He had a tolerable stomach, a brother a curé, very white hair, no teeth left in his mouth or in his mind, a tremor all over him, a Picard accent, a childish laugh, and the air of an old sheep. With all he had no other friend among the living than an old bookseller at the Porte St. Jacques of the name of Royol; and the dream of his life was to naturalize indigo in France.

About the year 1830 his brother the curé died, and almost immediately after, as when night arrives, the entire horizon became dark for M. Mabœuf. The bankruptcy of a notary despoiled him of ten thousand francs, all he possessed of his brother's capital and his own, while the revolution of July produced a crisis in the book trade. In times of pressure

the first thing which does not sell is a *Flora*, and that of the Environs of Cauteretz stopped dead. Weeks passed without a purchaser. At times M. Mabœuf started at the sound of the house bell, but Mother Plutarch, his servant, would say to him sadly, "It is the water-carrier, sir." In a word, M. Mabœuf left the Rue Mézières one day, abdicated his office as churchwarden, gave up St Sulpice, sold a portion, not of his books, but of his engravings, for which he cared least, and installed himself in a small house on the Boulevard Montparnasse, where, however, he only remained three months, for the ground floor and garden cost three hundred francs, and he did not dare set aside more than two hundred francs for rent. He carried off his *Flora*, his copper-plates, his herbals, portfolios, and books, and settled down near the Salpetrière, in a sort of hut, in the village of Austerlitz, where he rented for fifty crowns a year three rooms, a garden enclosed by a hedge, and a well. He took advantage of this removal to sell nearly all his furniture. On the day when he entered his new house he was in very good spirits, and drove in with his own hands the nails on which to hang the engravings; he dug in his garden for the rest of the day, and at night, seeing that Mother Plutarch had an anxious look and was thoughtful, he tapped her on the shoulder and said with a smile, "We have the indigo." Only two visitors, the publisher and Marius, were allowed admission to his hut of Austerlitz, a rackety name, by the way, which was most disagreeable to him.

Marius felt a liking for this candid old man, who saw himself slowly assailed by poverty, and yet was not depressed by it. Marius met Courfeyrac, and sought M. Mabœuf—very rarely, however—once or twice a month at the most. Marius's delight was to take long walks alone, either on the external boulevards at the Champ de Mars, or in the least frequented walks of the Luxembourg. It was in one of these walks that he discovered the Maison Gorbeau, and the isolation and the cheapness tempting him, he took a room there. He was only known by the name of M. Marius.

Some of his father's old generals and old comrades invited him to come and see them, when they knew him, and Marius did not refuse, for they were opportunities to speak about his father. He called thus from time to time upon Count Pajol, General Bellavesne, and General Frérion at the In-

valides. There was generally music and dancing, and on such evenings Marius put on his best suit; but he never went to such parties except on days when it was freezing tremendously hard, for he could not pay for a vehicle, and he would not go unless his boots were like looking glasses.

About the middle of the year 1831 the old woman who waited on Marius told him that his neighbours, the wretched Jondrette family, were going to be turned out. Marius, who spent nearly his whole time out of doors, scarce knew that he had neighbours.

"Why are they turned out?" he asked.

"Because they do not pay their rent, and owe two quarters."

"How much is it?"

"Twenty francs," said the old woman.

Marius had thirty francs in reserve in a drawer.

"Here are twenty-five francs," he said to the woman, "pay the rent of the poor people, give them five francs, and do not tell them where the money comes from."

At this time the regiment to which Theodule belonged was quartered in Paris. This was an opportunity for Aunt Gillenormand to have a second idea; her first one had been to set Theodule watching Marius, and she now plotted to make him succeed him.

One morning when M. Gillenormand was going to read something like the *Quotidienne*, his daughter came in and said in her softest voice, for the interests of her favourite were at stake,—

"Papa, Theodule is coming this morning to pay his respects to you."

"Ah!" said the old gentleman.

Then he began reading, thought no more of the grand-nephew, and soon became angry, which nearly always happened when he read. The paper he held, a Royalist one, we need hardly say, announced for the morrow, without any amenity, one of the daily events of Paris at that day. "The pupils of the schools of law and medicine were going to assemble in the Pantheon Square—to deliberate." The affair was one of the questions of the moment, the artillery of the national guard, and a conflict between the war minister and the "Citizen Militia," on the subject of guns parked in the court-yard of the Louvre. The students were going to "deliberate" on this, and it did not require much more to render

M. Gillenormand furious. He thought of Marius, who was a student, and who would probably go, like the others, " to deliberate at mid-day in the Pantheon Square."

While he was making these painful reflections Lieutenant Theodule came in, dressed in mufti, which was clever, and was discreetly introduced by Mlle Gillenormand. Mlle Gillenormand said aloud to her father,—

" Theodule, your grand-nephew."

And in a whisper to the lieutenant,—

" Assent to everything."

The lieutenant, but little accustomed to such venerable meetings, stammered, with some timidity, " Good morning, uncle," and gave a bow which was half a military salute and half a reverence.

" Ah, it's you, very good, sit down," said the ancestor, and after saying this he utterly forgot the lancer. Theodule sat down, and M. Gillenormand got up. He began walking up and down the room, with his hands in his pockets, talking aloud, and feeling with his old irritated fingers the two watches which he wore in his two fobs.

" That heap of scamps ! so they are going to meet in the Pantheon Square ! *Vertu de ma mie !* little ragamuffins who were at nurse yesterday ! if you were to squeeze their noses the milk would run out ! And they are going to deliberate to-morrow ! Where are we going ? It is clear that we are going to the abyss, and the descamisados have led us to it. The citizen artillery ! deliberate about the citizen artillery ! go and chatter in the open air about the squibs of the National Guard ! and whom will they meet there ? Just let us see to what Jacobinism leads. I will wager whatever you like, a million against a counter, that there will be only liberated convicts and pick-pockets there, for the Republicans and the galley-slaves are like one nose and one handkerchief."

" That is true," said Theodule.

M. Gillenormand half-turned his head, saw Theodule, and went on,—

" And then to think that that scamp had the villainy to become a Republican ! Why did you leave my house to become a Republican ! Pest ! in the first place, the people do not want your republic, for they are sensible, and know very well that there always have been kings, and always will be, and

they know, after all, that the people are only the people, and they laugh at your republic, do you hear, Cretin? Is not such a caprice horrible?"

"You are right, uncle," said Theodule.

M. Gillenormand continued,—

"Oh! the young men of the present day are ragamuffins, they do all they can to make themselves ugly,—they dress badly, they are afraid of women, and they have an air of begging round petticoats, which makes the girls laugh; on my word of honour, they look as if ashamed mendicants of love. And all these silly lads have political opinions, and it ought to be strictly prohibited. Ah, Marius! ah, scoundrel! to go and vociferate in the public square! to discuss, debate, and form measures—they call them measures. Why, it is the end of of the world; it is evidently the end of this wretched globe; it wanted a final shove, and France has given it."

"That is quite plain," said Theodule.

And taking advantage of the moment during which M. Gillenormand was recovering breath, the lancer added magisterially,—

"There ought to be no other paper but the *Moniteur*, and no other book but the Army List."

M. Gillenormand interrupted a gesture which he had begun, turned round, gazed intently at Theodule the lancer between the eyes, and said to him,—"You are an ass."

Marius at this period was a handsome young man of middle height, with very black hair, a lofty and intelligent forehead, open and impassioned nostrils, a sincere and calm air, and something haughty, pensive, and innocent was spread over his whole face. His profile, in which all the lines were rounded without ceasing to be firm, had that Germanic gentleness which entered France through Alsace and Lorraine, and that absence of angles which renders it so easy to recognize the Sicambri among the Romans, and distinguishes the leonine from the aquiline race.

For more than a year Marius had noticed in a deserted walk of the Luxembourg, the one which is bordered by the Parapet de la Pepinière, a man and a very young lady nearly always seated side by side at the most solitary end of the walk, near the Rue de l'Ouest. Whenever that accident

which mingles with the promenades of people whose eye is turned inwards, led Marius to this walk, and that was nearly daily, he met this couple. The man seemed to be about sixty years of age; he appeared sad and serious, and the whole of his person offered the robust and fatigued appearance of military men who have retired from service. If he had worn a decoration, Marius would have said, "He is an old officer." He looked kind, but unapproachable, and never fixed his eye on that of another person. He wore blue trousers, a coat of the same colour, and a broad-brimmed hat, all of which were constantly new, a black cravat, and a quaker's, that is to say, dazzlingly white, but very coarse shirt. A grisette who passed him one day said, "What a clean old widower." His hair was very white; and from this circumstance, Courfeyrac, who happened one day to be walking with Marius, christened him M. Leblanc, a name by which he continued to be known.

The first time that the young lady who accompanied him sat down with him upon the bench, which they seemed to have adopted, she was about thirteen or fourteen, so thin as to be almost ugly, awkward, insignificant, and promising to have perhaps very fine eyes some day. She wore the garb, at once old and childish, of boarders at a convent,— a badly-cut dress of coarse black merino. Marius examined for two or three days the old man, who was not yet aged, and this little girl, who was not yet a maiden, and then paid no further attention to them. They, on their side, seemed not even to see him, and talked together with a peaceful and careless air. The girl talked incessantly and gaily, the old man spoke but little, and at times he fixed upon her eyes filled with ineffable paternity. Marius had formed the mechanical habit of walking in this alley, and during a whole year invariably found them there.

In the second year, just at the point of our story which the reader has now reached, it happened that Marius broke off his daily walk in the Luxembourg, without exactly knowing why, and was nearly six months without setting foot in the garden. One day, however, he returned to it, went straight to "his" walk, and when he reached the end he noticed the well-known couple seated on the same bench, but when he drew near he found that, while it was the same man, it did not seem to be the same girl. The person he now

saw was a tall and lovely creature, possessing the charming outlines of the woman, at the precise moment when they are still combined with the most simple graces of the child—a fugitive and pure moment which can be rendered only by the two words " fifteen years."

When Marius passed her he could not see her eyes, which she constantly drooped ; he only saw her long lashes, which revealed modesty. This did not prevent the lovely girl from smiling while she listened to the white-haired man who was speaking to her, and nothing could be so ravishing as this fresh smile with the down-cast eyes. In six months the girl had become a maiden, ha d not only grown, but was idealized.

She wore a black brocade dress, a cloak of the same material, and a white crape bonnet ; her white gloves displayed the elegance of her hand, which was playing with the ivory handle of a parasol, and her satin boot revealed the smallness of her foot ; when you passed her, her whole toilette exhaled a youthful and penetrating perfume. As for the man, he was still the same. The second time that Marius passed, the girl raised her eyelids, and he could see that her eyes were of a deep cœrulean blue, but in this veiled azure there was only the glance of a child. She looked at Marius carelessly, as she would have looked at the child playing under the sycamores, or the marble vase that threw a shadow over the bench ; and Marius continued his walk, thinking of something else. He passed the bench four or five times, but did not once turn his eyes towards the young lady. On the following days he returned as usual to the Luxembourg ; as usual he found the " father and daughter " there, but he paid no further attention to them. But one day, as he passed by the bench, the young lady happened to raise her eyes on him, and their two glances met. There is a day on which every maiden looks in this way, and woe to the man on whom her glance falls.

On returning to his garret in the evening, Marius took a glance at his clothes, and perceived for the first time that he had been guilty of the extraordinary impropriety and stupidity of walking in the Luxembourg in his " every-day dress," that is to say, with a broken-brimmed hat, clumsy boots, black trousers, white at the knees, and a black coat pale at the elbows. The next day, at the accustomed hour, Marius took out of the drawers his new coat, his new trousers,

his new hat, and his new boots; he dressed himself in this complete panoply, put on gloves, an extraordinary luxury, and went off to the Luxembourg.

On reaching the Luxembourg and turning into the walk he saw M. Leblanc and the young lady at the other end, seated on "their" bench. As he drew near, his pace gradually decreased. He passed in front of them, upright and firm, but red up to the ears, and not daring to take a glance either to the right or left. She was dressed as on the previous day, and he heard an ineffable voice which must "be her voice." She was talking quietly, and was very beautiful; he felt it, though he did not attempt to look at her," and yet," he thought, "she could not fail to have esteem and consideration for me if she knew that I am the real author of the dissertation on Marcos Obregon de La Ronda, which M. François de Neufchateau appropriated, and made a preface to his edition of Gil Blas."

He passed the bench, went to the end of the walk, which was close by, then turned again and passed the young lady. This time he was very pale, and his feelings were most disagreeable. He went away from the bench and the maiden, and while turning his back, he fancied that she was looking at him, and this made him totter. He did not again attempt to pass the bench; he stopped at about the middle of the walk and then sat down, a most unusual thing for him, taking side glances, and thinking in the innermost depths of his mind that after all it was difficult for a person whose white bonnet and black dress he admired to be absolutely insensible to his showy trousers and new coat. At the end of a quarter of an hour, he rose, as if about to walk towards this bench which was surrounded by a glory, but he remained motionless. For the first time in fifteen months he said to himself that the gentleman who sat there daily with his daughter must have noticed him, and probably considered his assiduity strange. For the first time, too, he felt it was rather irreverent to designate this stranger, even in his own thoughts, by the nickname of M. Leblanc.

He remained thus for some minutes with hanging head, making sketches in the sand with the stick he held in his hand. Then he suddenly turned in the direction opposed to the bench and went home. That day he forgot to go to dinner; he noticed the fact at eight in the evening, and, as it

was too late to go to the Rue St Jacques, he ate a lump of bread. He did not go to bed till he had brushed and carefully folded up his coat.

One day Marius had seated himself on a bench, holding in his hand an open book, when he suddenly started. M. Leblanc had left his bench, the girl was holding her father's arm, and both were proceeding slowly toward the middle of the walk where Marius was. He shut his book, then opened it again and tried to read, but he trembled, and the glory came straight toward him. "Oh, heaven!" he thought, "I shall not have the time to throw myself into an attitude. What! she is going to pass here; her feet will tread this sand, this walk, two paces from me?" He was quite upset, he would have liked to have been very handsome, and have the cross. He heard the soft measured sound of their footsteps approaching him, and he imagined that M. Leblanc was taking a wry glance at him. The girl passed, and in pausing looked at him,—looked at him intently, with a thoughtful gentleness which made Marius shudder from head to foot. It seemed to him as if she reproached him for keeping away from her so long, and was saying, "I have come instead." She appeared to him lovelier than she had ever been, lovely with a beauty at once feminine and angelic, a perfect beauty, which would have made Petrarch sing and Dante kneel.

He looked after her till she disappeared, and then walked about the garden like a maniac. He probably at times laughed to himself and talked aloud. He was so thoughtful among the nurse girls that each of them fancied him in love with her.

M. Leblanc eventually noticed something, for frequently when Marius arrived he got up and began walking. He left their accustomed seat, and adopted at the other end of the walk the bench close to the Gladiator, as if to see whether Marius would follow them. Marius did not understand it, and committed this fault. "The father" began to become unpunctual, and no longer brought his "daughter" every day. One evening at twilight Marius found on the bench which "M. Leblanc and his daughter" had just quitted, a simple, unembroidered handkerchief, which, however, was white and pure, and seemed to him to exhale ineffable odours. He seized it with transport, and noticed that it was marked with the letters U. F. Marius knew nothing about the lovely

girl, neither her family, her name, nor her abode; these two letters were the first thing of hers which he seized, adorable initials, upon which he at once began to erect his scaffolding. U. was evidently her Christian name. "Ursule!" he thought; "what a delicious name!" Not knowing that the handkerchief was really the old gentleman's, he placed it on his heart during the day, and at night upon his lips to go to sleep.

In three or four weeks Marius had devoured this happiness, and craved another; he wished to know where she lived. He followed "Ursule." She lived in the Rue de l'Ouest, the most isolated part, in a new three-storeyed house of modest appearance. From this moment Marius added to his happiness of seeing her at the Luxembourg the happiness of following her home. He knew what her name was, her Christian name at least, he knew where she lived, and he now wanted to know who she was. One evening after following them home, and watching them disappear in the gateway, he went in after them, and valiantly addressed the porter.

"Is that the gentleman of the first floor who has just come in?"

"No," the porter answered, "it is the gentleman of the third floor."

Another step made! This success emboldened Marius.

"Front?" he asked.

"Hang it," said the porter, "our rooms all look on the street."

"And what is the gentleman's position?" Marius continued.

"He lives on his property. He is a very good man, who does a deal of good to the wretched, though he is not rich."

"What is his name?" Marius added.

The porter raised his head and said,—

"Do you happen to be a police spy, sir?"

Marius went off much abashed, but highly delighted, for he was progressing.

On the morrow M. Leblanc made but a short appearance at the Luxembourg, and went away in broad daylight. Marius followed them to the Rue de l'Ouest, as was his habit, and on reaching the gateway M. Leblanc made his daughter go in first, then stopped, turned, and looked intently at Marius. The next day they did not come to the Luxembourg, and

Marius waited in vain the whole day. At nightfall, he went to the Rue de l'Ouest, and noticed a light in the third-floor windows, and he walked about beneath these windows till the light was extinguished. The next day there was no one at the Luxembourg; Marius waited all day, and then went to keep his night-watch under the windows. This took him till ten o'clock, and his dinner became what it could, for fever nourishes the sick man and love the lover. Eight days passed in this way, and M. Leblanc and his daughter did not again appear at the Luxembourg. Marius made sorrowful conjectures, for he did not dare watch the gateway by day; he contented himself with going at night to contemplate the reddish brightness of the window-panes. He saw shadows pass now and then, and his heart beat.

On the eighth day, when he arrived beneath the windows, there was no light. He waited till ten o'clock, till midnight, till one o'clock, but no light was kindled at the third-floor windows, and nobody entered the house. He went away with very gloomy thoughts. On the morrow—for he only lived from morrow to morrow, and he had no to-day, so to speak—he saw nobody at the Luxembourg, as he expected, and at nightfall he went to the house. There was no light at the windows, the shutters were closed, and the third floor was all darkness. Marius rapped, walked in, and said to the porter,—

"The gentleman on the third floor?"

"Gone away," the porter answered.

Marius tottered, and asked feebly,—

"Since when?"

"Yesterday."

"Where is he living now?"

"I do not know."

"Then he did not leave his new address?"

"No."

And the porter, raising his nose, recognized Marius.

"What? it's you, is it?" he said; "why, you must really be a spy."

Summer passed away, then autumn and winter arrived. Neither M. Leblanc nor the young lady had set foot again in the Luxembourg, while Marius had but one thought, that of seeing again this sweet and adorable face. He fell into a dark sorrow, and it was all over with him. He made himself a hun-

dred reproaches. "Why did I follow her? I was so happy merely in seeing her! She looked at me, and was not that immense? She looked as if she loved me, and was not that everything? I wanted to have what? there is nothing beyond that, and I was absurd. It is my fault," etc., etc.

He began living again more than ever in solitude, crushed, giving way to his internal agony, walking up and down like a wolf caught in a trap, everywhere seeking the absent one, and brutalized by love.

One day he had a meeting which produced a strange effect upon him. In the little streets adjoining the Boulevard des Invalides he passed a man dressed like a workman, and wearing a deep-peaked cap, under which white locks peered out. Marius was struck by the beauty of this white hair, and looked at the man, who was walking slowly, and as if absorbed in painful meditation. Strange to say, he fancied that he could recognize M. Leblanc,—it was the same hair, the same profile, so far as the peak allowed him to see, and the same gait, though somewhat more melancholy. But what was the meaning of this disguise? Marius was greatly surprised, and when he came to himself again his first impulse was to follow the man, but he hit on this idea too late, for he was no longer there. He had turned into some side street, and Marius was unable to find him again. "After all," he said to himself, "it is probably only a resemblance."

CHAPTER XIII

Marius still lived at No. 50–52, but he paid no attention to his fellow-lodgers. At this period, in truth, there were no other tenants in the house, but himself and those Jondrettes whose rent he had once paid, without ever having spoken to father, mother, or daughters. The other lodgers had removed, were dead, or turned out for not paying their rent.

One evening when it was his hour to dine, Marius crossed the threshold of his door and slowly walked along the boulevard in the direction of the Rue St. Jacques. He walked thoughtfully with hanging head. All at once he felt himself elbowed in the fog. He turned and saw two girls in rags, one tall and thin, the other not quite so tall, who passed hurriedly, panting, frightened, and as if running away. Marius noticed in the twi-

light their livid faces, uncovered heads, dishevelled hair, their ragged petticoats, and bare feeting. While running they talked together, and the elder said,—

"The slops came, and nearly caught me."

Marius understood that the police had nearly caught the two girls, and that they had arranged to escape. They buried themselves beneath the trees behind him, and for a few minutes produced a sort of vague whiteness in the obscurity. Marius had stopped for a moment, and was just going on, when he noticed a small grey packet lying at his feet. He stooped down and picked it up; it was a sort of envelope, apparently containing papers.

"Why," he said, "these poor girls must have let it fall."

He turned back and called to them, but could not find them. He thought they must be some distance off, so he thrust the parcel into his pocket and went to dinner.

At night, as he undressed to go to bed, his hand felt in his coat pocket the parcel which he had picked up in the boulevard and forgotten. He thought that it would be as well to open it, as the packet might contain the girls' address. He opened the envelope, which was not sealed, and contained four letters, also unsealed. The addresses were on all four, and they exhaled a frightful perfume of tobacco. The first letter was addressed to *Madame, Madame la Marquise de Gruchera, on the Square opposite the Chamber of Deputies.* Marius said to himself that he would probably find the information he wanted, and as the letter was not sealed he could read it without impropriety. It was drawn up as follows:—

"Madame la Marquise,

"The virtue of clemency and piety is that which unites society most closely. Move your Christian feelings, and dain a glance of compassion at this unfortunate Spaniard, and victim to this loyalty and attachment to the sacred cause of legitimacy, who shed his blood, devoted the whole of his fortune to defend this cause, and is now in the greatest missery. He does not doubt that you, honoured lady, will grant some assistence to preserve an existence entirely painful for a soldier of honour and edducation, who is covered with wounds, and he reckons before hand on the humanity which annimates you, and the interest which your ladyship takes in so unhappy a nacion.

His prayer will not be in vain, and His gratitude will retain her charming memory.

"With the most respectful feelings, I have the honour to be, madame,

"DON ALVARES, Spanish captain of cavvalry, a Royalist refugee in France, who is travelling for his country and who wants the means to continue his jurney."

No address was attached to the signature, but Marius hoped to find it in the second letter, of which the superscription was,—"*To Madame, Madame la Comtesse de Montvernet, No. 9, Rue Casette.*" This is what Marius read,—

"My Lady Comtess,

"It is a unhappy mother of a family of six children, of which the youngest is only eight months old; I ill since my last confinement, deserted by my husband, and havving no ressourse in the world, living in the most frightful indijance.

"Trusting in your ladyship, she has the honour to be, madame with profound respect,

"ANTOINETTE BALIZARD."

Marius passed to the third letter, which was, like the preceding, a petition, and he read in it,—

"*Monsieur Pabourgeot, Elector, wholesale dealer in caps, Rue St. Denis, at the corner of the Rue Aux-Fers.*

"I venture to address this letter to you, to ask you to grant me the pretious favour of your sympathies, and to interest you in a litterary man, who has just sent a drama to the Théatre Français. The subject is historical, and the scene takes place in Auvergne in the time of the Empire; the style, I believe, is natural, laconic, and may posess some merit. There are couplets for singing at four places. The comic, the serious, and the unexpected elements are blended in it with a variety of characters, and a tinge of romance is lightly spread through the whole plot, which moves misteriously, and the finale takes place amid several brilliant tableaux. My principal desire is to sattisfy the desire which progressively animates sosiety, that is to say fashion, that capritious and vague whirligig which changes with nearly every wind.

"In spite of these qualities, I have reason to fear that jealousy and the selfishness of privileged authors may obtain

my exclusion from the stage, for I am not unaware of the vexation which is caused to new comers.

" Monsieur Pabourgeot, your just reputation as the enlightened protector of literary men, emboldens me to send to you my daughter, who will explain to you our indijant situation, wanting for bread and fire in this winter season. To tell you that I wish you to accept the homage which I desire to make to you of my drama, and all those that may succeed it, is to prove to you how much I desire the honour of sheltering myself under your ægis, and adorning my writings with your name. If you dain to honour me with the most modest offering, I will at once set to work writing a coppy of verses, by which to pay you my debt of grattitude. These verses, which I will try to render as perfect as possible, will be sent to you before they are insirted in the beginning of the drama, and produced on the stage.

" My most respectful homage to Monsieur and Madame Pabourgeot.

" GLENFLOT, man of letters.

" P.S.—If it was only forty sous. I appologize for sending my daughter, and not paying my respects personaly, but sad reasons of dress do not allow me, alas! to go out."

Marius then opened the last letter, which was addressed to—*The Benevolent gentleman of the church of St Jacques du Haut-pas*, and it contained the following few lines :—

" Benevolent man,—

" If you will dain to accompany my daughter you will witness a misserable calamity, and I will show you my certificates.

" At the sight of these dokuments your generous soul will be moved by a feeling of sensitive benevolence, for true philosophers always experience lively emotions.

" Allow, compasionate man, that a man must experience the most cruel want, and that it is very painful to obtain any relief, by having it attested by the authorities, as if a man were not at liberty to suffer and die of inanicion, while waiting till our missery is releaved. Fate is too cruel to some, and too lavish or protecting for others. I await your presence or your offering, if you dain to make one, and I beg you to believe in

the grateful feelings with which I have the honour of being, really magnamious sir,

" Your very humble and most
obedient servant,
P. Fabantou, dramatic artist."

After reading these four letters Marius did not find himself much more advanced than before. In the first place not one of the writers gave his address; and next, they appeared to come from four different individuals, " Don Alvarez, Madame Balizard, Genflot the poet, and Fabantou the dramatic artist;" but these letters offered this peculiarity, that they were all in the same hand-writing. What could he concluded from this, save that they came from the same person? Moreover—and this rendered the conjecture even more probable—the paper, which was coarse and yellow, was the same for all four, the tobacco smell was the same, and though an attempt had evidently been made to vary the hand-writing, the same orthographical mistakes were reproduced with the most profound tranquillity, and Glenflot, the literary man, was no more exempt from them than the Spanish captain. To strive and divine this mystery was time thrown away, and if he had not picked it up it would have looked like a mystification. After all they were papers evidently of no value. Marius returned them to the envelope, threw the lot into a corner, and went to bed.

At about seven in the morning he had got up and breakfasted and was trying to set to work, when there came a gentle tap at the door.

" Come in," said Marius.

The door opened.

" What is the matter, Mame Bougon?"

A voice, which was not Mame Bougon's, replied,—" I beg your pardon, sir."

It was a hollow, cracked, choking voice, the voice of an old man, rendered hoarse by dram-drinking and exposure to the cold. Marius turned sharply and noticed a girl.

A very young girl was standing in the half-open door, a wretched, exhausted, fleshless creature, with only a chemise and a petticoat upon her shivering and frozen nudity; pointed shoulders emerged from her chemise; she was of an earthy pallor, her hands were red, her mouth degraded, and she had

lost teeth; her eye was sunken and hollow, and she had the outline of an abortive girl, and the look of a corrupted old woman, or fifty years blended with fifteen. She was one of those beings who are at once weak and horrible, and who make those shudder whom they do not cause to weep.

"What do you want, miss?" Marius asked.

The girl replied, with her drunken galley-slave's voice,—

"It is a letter for you, Monsieur Marius."

She addressed him by name, and hence he could not doubt but that she had to do with him; but who was this girl, and how did she know his name? On opening the letter, he noticed that the large, clumsy wafer was still damp, which proved that the missive had not come a long distance, and he read,

"My amicable neighbour and young sir!

"I have herd of your kindness to me, and that you paid my half-year's rent six months go. I bless you for it, young sir. My eldest daughter will tell you that we have been without a morsel of bread for two days,—four persons, and my wife ill. If I am not deseived in my opinion, I dare to hope that your generous heart will be affected by this statment, and will arouse in you a desire to be propicious to me, by daining to lavish on me a trifling charity.

"I am, with the distinguished consideration which is due to the benefactors of humanity,

"JONDRETTE.

"P. S. My daughter will wait for your orders, my dear Monsieur Marius."

This letter, in the midst of the obscure adventure which had been troubling Marius since the previous evening, was like a candle in a cellar; all was suddenly lit up. This letter came from where the other letters came. It was the same hand-writing, the same style, the same orthography, the same paper, and the same tobacco smell. There were five letters, five stories, five names, five signatures, and only one writer. The Spanish captain Don Alvarez, the unhappy mother Balizard, the dramatic author Genflot, and the old comedian Fabantou, were all four Jondrette, if, indeed, Jondrette's name were really Jondrette.

During the lengthened period that Marius had inhabited this No. 50–52, he had, we may suppose, but rare occasions to see, or even catch a glance of his very low neighbours. Now he

saw everything clearly. He comprehended that his neighbour Jondrette had hit upon the trade of working upon the charity of benevolent persons, that he procured addresses and wrote under supposititious names, to people whom he supposed to be rich and charitable, letters which his children delivered at their risk and peril, for this father had attained such a stage that he hazarded his daughters; he was gambling with destiny, and staked them.

While Marius was bending on the young girl an astonished and painful glance, she was walking about the garret with the boldness of a spectre and without troubling herself in the slightest about her state of nudity. She moved the chairs about, disturbed the toilette articles on the chest of drawers, felt Marius' clothes, and rummaged in every corner.

Marius was thinking, and left her alone, and she walked up to the table.

"Ah!" she said, "books. I know how to read."

She quickly seized the book lying on the table, and read rather fluently,—

"General Bauduin received orders to carry with the five battalions of his brigade the Chateau of Hougomont, which is in the centre of the plain of Waterloo—"

She broke off.

"Ah, Waterloo, I know all about that. It was a battle in which my father was engaged, for he served in the army. We are thorough Bonapartists, we are. Waterloo was fought against the English."

She laid down the book, took up a pen, and exclaimed, "And I can write, too. Would you like a proof? Stay, I will write a line to show you."

And ere he had time to answer she wrote on a sheet of white paper in the middle of the table, '*Here are the slops.*' Then throwing down the pen, she added,—

"There are no errors in spelling, as you can see, for my sister and I were well educated. We have not always been what we are now, we were not made—"

Here she stopped, fixed her glassy eye on Marius, and burst into a laugh, as she said, with an intonation which contained every possible agony, blended with every possible cynicism,—

"Bosh!" and then added, "Do you know, M. Marius, that you are a very good-looking fellow!"

Her voice tried to be very soft, and only succeeded in being very low; a part of her words was lost in the passage from the larynx to the lips, as on a pianoforte some keys of which are broken. Marius had gently recoiled.

"I have a packet," he said, with his cold gravity, "which I believe, belongs to you. Allow me to deliver it to you."

And he handed her the envelope which contained the four letters; she clapped her hands and said,—

"We looked for it everywhere."

Then she quickly seized the parcel, and undid the envelope, while saying,—

"Lord of Lords! how my sister and I *did* look for it! And so you found it? You see, it was dropped while we were running, and it was my brat of a sister who was such an ass. When we got home we could not find it, and as we did not wish to be beaten, which is unnecessary, we said that we had delivered the letters, and that the answer was Nix! and here are the poor letters! So then, it was you that we ran against last night? We could not see anything, and I said to my sister, 'is it a gentleman?' and she answered, 'Yes, I think it is a gentleman?'"

While saying this she had unfolded the petition addressed to the "benevolent gentleman of the church of St. Jacques du Haut-pas."

"Hilloh!" she said, "this is the one for the old swell who goes to mass. Why, 'tis just the hour, and I will carry it to him. He will perhaps give us something for breakfast."

Then she burst into a laugh, and added,—

"Do you know what it will be if we breakfast to-day? We shall have our breakfast of the day before yesterday, our dinner of the day before yesterday, our breakfast of yesterday, our dinner of yesterday, all at once this morning. Well, hang it all! if you are not satisfied, rot, dogs!"

This reminded Marius of what the hapless girl had come to get from him.

After feeling in the depths of all his pockets, Marius succeeded in getting together five francs sixteen sous; it was at this moment all that he possessed in the world. "Here is my to-day's dinner," he thought, "and to-morrow will take care of itself." He kept the sixteen sous, and gave the girl the five-franc piece, which she eagerly clutched.

"Five francs! a shiner! a monarch! ain't that stunning? Well, you are a jolly cock, and I do the humble to you. Hurrah for the brick! two days' grub; here's a feed; beans and bacon and a belly-full; you're a oner!"

She pulled her chemise up over her shoulder, gave Marius a deep courtesy, and a familiar wave of the hand, and walked towards the door, saying,—

"Good day sir, but no matter, I'll go and find my old swell."

As she passed she noticed on the drawers an old crust of dry bread, mouldering in the dust; she caught it up, and bit into it savagely, grumbling,—

"It is good, it is hard; it breaks my teeth!"

Then she left the room.

When she was gone Marius looked at the wall which separated him from the Jondrettes, as if his pitying glance could pass through the partition, and warm the unhappy beings. The wall was a thin coating of plaster, supported by laths and beams, so unsubstantial that it allowed the murmurs of words and voices to be distinctly heard. A man must be a dreamer like Marius not to have noticed the fact before. No paper was hung on either side of the wall, and its clumsy construction was plainly visible. Almost unconsciously Marius examined this partition; for at times reverie examines, scrutinizes, and observes much as thought does. All at once he rose, for he had just noticed near the ceiling a triangular hole produced by the gap between three laths. The plaster which once covered this hole had fallen off, and by getting on his chest of drawers he could see through this aperture into the room of the Jondrettes. Commiseration has, and should have, its curiosity, and it is permissible to regard misfortune traitorously when we wish to relieve it. "Let me see," thought Marius, "what these people are like, and what state they are in." He clambered on the drawers, put his eye to the hole, and looked.

Marius was poor, and his room was indigent; but the garret into which he was now looking was abject, dirty, fetid, infectious, dark, and sordid. The furniture only consisted of a straw-bottomed chair, a rickety table, a few old earthenware articles, and in the corners two indescribable beds. The only light came through a sky-light with four panes of glass, and festooned with spider-webs. The walls had a leprous look, and were covered with gashes and scars, like a face disfigured

by some horrible disease, and a blear-eyed damp oozed from them. Obscene designs, clumsily drawn in charcoal, could be distinguished on them.

One of the beds was near the door, the other near the window, but the ends of both ran down to the mantel-piece, and faced Marius. In a corner near the hole through which he was peeping, a coloured engraving, in a black frame, represented a sleeping woman and a sleeping child, the child lying on the woman's knees, an eagle in the clouds with a crown in its beak, and the woman removing the crown from the child's head, without awakening it, however. In the background Napoleon, surrounded by a glory, was leaning against a dark blue column, with a yellow capital, that bore the following inscription :

MARINGO.
AUSTERITS
JENA.
WAGRAMME.
ELOT.

Below this frame a sort of wooden panel, longer than it was wide, was placed on the ground, and leaning against the wall. It looked like a picture turned from the spectator, or some sign-board detached from a wall, and forgotten there while waiting to be hung again. At the table, on which Marius noticed pen, ink, and paper, a man was seated, of about sixty years of age, short, thin, livid, haggard, with a sharp, cruel, and listless look, a hideous scamp. This man had a long grey beard, and wore a woman's chemise, which allowed his hairy chest, and naked arms, bristling with grey hairs, to be seen. Under this chemise might be noticed muddy trousers, and boots out of which his toes stuck. He had a pipe in his mouth, and was smoking ; there was no bread in the garret, but there was still tobacco. He was writing, probably some letter like those which Marius had read.

A stout woman, who might be forty or one hundred, crouched up near the chimney-piece on her naked feet. She too was only dressed in a chemise and a cotton petticoat, pieced with patches of old cloth, and an apron of coarse canvas concealed one half of the petticoat. Though this woman was sitting all of a heap you could see that she was very tall, and a species of giantess by her husband's side. She had frightful

hair, of a reddish auburn, beginning to turn grey, which she thrust back every now and then with enormous strong hands, with flat nails. On one of the beds Marius caught a glimpse of a tall, sickly girl, sitting up almost naked, and with hanging feet, who did not seem to hear, see, or live; she was, doubtless, the younger sister of the one who had come to him. She appeared to be eleven or twelve years of age, but on examining her attentively it could be seen that she was at least fourteen.

In this lodging there was not the slightest sign of work; but in one corner were some iron implements of dubious appearance. Marius gazed for some time at this mournful interior, which was more terrifying than the interior of a tomb, for the human soul could be seen stirring in it and life palpitating.

Marius, with an aching heart, was just going to descend from the species of observatory which he had improvised, when the door of the garret was suddenly opened, and the elder daughter appeared on the threshold. She had on her feet clumsy men's shoes, and was covered with an old ragged cloak, which Marius had not noticed an hour previously, and which she had probably left at his door, in order to inspire greater sympathy, and put on again when she went out. She came in, shut the door after her, stopped to fetch breath, for she was panting, and then cried, with an expression of triumph and joy,—

"He is coming!"

"Who?" the father asked; "the philanthropist from the church of St. Jacques?"

"Yes. He is following me. He is coming in a hackney coach."

"If he is coming in a coach, how is it that you got before him? Did you give him the address, and are you certain you told him the last door on the right in the passage? I only hope he will not make a mistake. Did you find him at church? did he read my letter, and what did he say to you?"

"Ta, ta, ta," said the girl, "how you gallop, my good man. I went into the church, he was at his usual place, I made a courtesy and handed him the letter, he read it, and said to me, 'Where do you live, my child?' I said, 'I will show you the way, sir;' he said, 'No, give me your address, for my daughter has some purchases to make. I will take a hackney coach, and be at your abode as soon as you.' I gave him the address, and

when I mentioned the house he seemed surprised, and hesitated for a moment, but then said, 'No matter, I will go.' When mass was over I saw him leave the church and get into a coach with his daughter. And I carefully told him the last door on the right at the end of the passage."

"And what tells you that he will come?"

"I have just seen the coach turn into the Rue du Petit Banquier, and that is why I ran."

"How do you know it is the same coach?"

"Because I noticed the number, of course. Four hundred and forty."

"Good, you are a clever girl."

The man drew himself up, and there was a species of illumination on his face.

"Wife," he cried, "you hear! Here is the philanthropist, put out the fire, and go to bed."

The stupefied mother did not stir, but the father, with the agility of a mountebank, seized the cracked pot which stood on the chimney-piece, and threw water on the logs. Then he said to his elder daughter,—

"Pull the straw out of the chair."

As his daughter did not understand him, he seized the chair and kicked the seat out.

He then turned to the younger girl, who was on the bed, near the window, and shouted in a thundering voice,—

"Come off the bed directly, idler; you never will do anything: break a pane of glass!"

The little girl jumped off the bed, shivering.

"Break a pane!" he continued.

The child, with a sort of terrified obedience, stood on tiptoe, and broke a pane with her fist; the glass fell with a great clash.

"All right!" said the father.

An icy blast blew through the pane and entered the room. The external fog penetrated it, and dilated like a white wadding pulled open by invisible fingers. The snow could be seen falling through the broken pane, and the cold promised by the Candlemas sun had really arrived. The father took a look around him, as if to make sure that he had forgotten nothing, then he fetched an old spade, and strewed the ashes over the wet logs so as to conceal them entirely. Then get-

ting up and leaning against the chimney-piece, he said,—

"Now we can receive the philanthropist."

At this moment there was a gentle tap at the door; the man rushed forward and opened it, while exclaiming with deep bows and smiles of adoration,—"Come in, sir, deign to enter, my respected benefactor, as well as your charming daughter."

A man of middle age and a young lady stood in the doorway; Marius had not left his post, and what he felt at this moment is beyond the human tongue.

It was She; and any one who has loved knows the radiant meaning conveyed in the three letters that form the word She. It was the gentle creature he had lost, the star which had gleamed on him for six months, it was the forehead, the mouth, the lovely mouth which had produced night by departing. The eclipse was over, and she now reappeared—reappeared in this darkness, in this attic, in this filthy den, in this horror. Marius trembled. She was still the same, though, perhaps, a little paler. She was accompanied by M. Leblanc, and she walked into the room and placed a rather large parcel on the table. The elder girl had withdrawn behind the door, and looked with a jealous eye at the velvet bonnet, the satin pelisse, and the charming, happy face.

The garret was so dark that persons who came into it felt much as if they were going into a cellar. The two new-comers, therefore, advanced with some degree of hesitation, scarce distinguishing the vague forms around them, while they were perfectly seen and examined by the eyes of the denizens in the attic, who were accustomed to this gloom. M. Leblanc walked up to Father Jondrette, with his sad and gentle smile, and said,—

"You will find in this parcel, sir, new apparel, woollen stockings, and blankets."

"Our angelic benefactor overwhelms us," Jondrette said, bowing to the ground; then, bending down to the ear of his elder daughter, he added in a hurried whisper, while the two visitors were examining this lamentable interior,—

"Did I not say so? clothes, but no money. They are all alike. By the way, how was the letter to the old ass signed?"

"Fabantou."

"The actor, all right."

It was lucky that Jondrette asked this, for at the same

moment M. Leblanc turned to him, and said with the air of a person who is trying to remember the name,—

"I see that you are much to be pitied, Monsieur—"

"Fabantou," Jondrette quickly added.

"Monsieur Fabantou, yes, that is it, I remember."

"An actor, sir, who has been successful in his time."

Here Jondrette evidently believed the moment arrived to trap this philanthropist, and he shouted in a voice which had some of the bombast of the country showman, and the humility of the professional beggar,—"A pupil of Talma, sir! I am a pupil of Talma! Fortune smiled upon me formerly, but now, alas! the turn of misfortune has arrived. You see, my benefactor, we have no bread, no fire. My poor babies have no fire. My sole chair without a seat! a pane of glass broken! in such weather as this! my wife in bed, ill!"

While speaking Jondrette had been looking at the "philanthropist" in a peculiar way, and seemed to be scrutinizing him attentively, as if trying to recall his recollections. All at once, profiting by a moment during which the new-comers were questioning the little girl about her injured hand, which had been cut by the broken glass, he passed close to his wife who was lying in her bed with a surprised and stupid air, and said to her, in a hurried whisper,—

"Look at that man!"

Then he turned to M. Leblanc, and continued his lamentations.

"Look, sir! my sole clothing consists of a chemise of my wife's all torn, in the heart of winter. I cannot go out for want of a coat, and if I had the smallest bit of a coat I would go and call on Mademoiselle Mars, who knows me, and is much attached to me. And do you know, my charming young lady, and you, my generous protector, I am bringing up my daughters in religion, sir, and did not wish them to turn to the stage. I intend to educate them virtuously, and they must be respectable and honest, and believe in GOD'S Holy name. Well, worthy sir, do you know what will happen to-morrow? To-morrow is the fatal 4th February, the last respite my landlord has granted me, and if I do not pay my rent by to-night, my eldest daughter, myself, my wife with her fever, my child with her wound, will be all four of us turned out of here into the street, shelterless in the rain

and snow. That is the state of the case, sir! I owe four quarters, a year's rent, that is to say, sixty francs."

Jondrette lied, for four quarters would only have been forty francs, and he could not owe four, as it was not six months since Marius had paid two for him. M. Leblanc took a five-franc piece from his pocket and threw it on the table. Jondrette had time to growl in his grown-up daughter's ear,—

"The scamp! what does he expect me to do with his five francs? They will not pay for the chair and a pane of glass. There's the result of making an outlay."

In the mean while, M. Leblanc had taken off a heavy brown coat, which he wore over his blue one, and thrown it on the back of a chair.

"Monsieur Fabantou," he said, "I have only these five francs about me, but I will take my daughter home and return to-night. Is it not to-night that you have to pay?"

Jondrette's face was lit up with a strange expression, and he hurriedly answered,—

"Yes, respected sir, I must be with my landlord by eight o'clock."

"I will be here by six, and bring you the sixty francs."

"My benefactor!" Jondrette exclaimed wildly, and he added in a whisper,—

"Look at him carefully, wife."

M. Leblanc had given his arm to the lovely young lady, and was turning to the door.

"Till this evening, my friends," he said.

At this moment the overcoat left on the back of the chair caught the eye of the elder girl.

"Sir," she said, "you are forgetting your great-coat."

Jondrette gave his daughter a crushing glance, accompanied by a formidable shrug of the shoulders, but M. Leblanc turned and replied smilingly,—

"I do not forget it, I'll leave it."

"Oh, my august benefactor," said Jondrette, "I am melting into tears! permit me to conduct you to your vehicle."

"If you go out," M. Leblanc remarked, "put on that overcoat, for it is really very cold."

Jondrette did not let this be said twice, but eagerly put

on the brown coat. Then they all three went out, Jondrette preceding the two strangers.

Marius had lost nothing of all this scene, and yet in reality he had seen nothing. His eyes remained fixed on the maiden, his heart had, so to speak, seized and entirely enfolded her from her first step into the garret. During the whole time she had been there he had lived that life of ecstasy which suspends material perceptions, and concentrates the whole mind upon one point. While she was opening the parcel, and unfolding the clothes and blankets, questioning the sick mother kindly, and the little wounded girl tenderly, he watched her every movement, and tried to hear her words. Though he knew her eyes, her forehead, her beauty, her waist, and her walk, he did not know the sound of her voice. He fancied that he had caught a few words once at the Luxembourg, but he was not absolutely sure. He would have given ten years of his life to hear her, and to carry off in his soul a little of this music, but all was lost in the lamentable braying of Jondrette's trumpet.

When she left the room he had but one thought—to follow her, to attach himself to her trail, not to leave her till he knew where she lived, or at least not to lose her again after having so miraculously found her. He leapt off the drawers, and seized his hat, but just as he laid his hand on the latch and was going out a reflection arrested him; the passage was long, the staircase steep, Jondrette chattering, and M. Leblanc had doubtless not yet got into his coach again. If turning in the passage, or on the stairs, he were to perceive him, Marius, in this house, he would assuredly be alarmed, and find means to escape him again. What was to be done? Wait awhile? but during this delay the vehicle might start off. Marius was perplexed, but at length risked it, and left the room. There was no one in the passage, and he ran to the stairs, and as there was no one upon them, he hurried on and reached the boulevard just in time to see a hackney coach turning the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier, on its road to Paris.

Marius rushed in that direction, and, on reaching the corner of the boulevard, saw the hackney coach again rapidly rolling along the Rue Mouffetard; it was already some distance off, and he had no means of catching it up. At this mo-

ment Marius perceived a cab passing along the boulevard empty. There was only one thing to be done, get into this cab and follow the hackney coach; that was sure, efficacious, and without danger. Marius made the driver a sign to stop, and shouted to him, "By the hour!" Marius had no cravat on, he wore his old working coat, from which buttons were missing, and one of the plaits of his shirt was torn. The driver stopped, winked, and held out to Marius his left hand, as he gently rubbed his fore-finger with his thumb.

"What do you mean?" Marius asked.

"Payment in advance," said the coachman.

Marius remembered that he had only sixteen sous in his pocket.

"How much is it?"

"Forty sous."

"I will pay on returning."

The driver, in reply, whistled the air of La Palisse, and lashed his horse. Marius watched the cab go off with a haggard look; for the want of twenty-four sous, he lost his joy his happiness, his love! He thought bitterly, and, we must add, with deep regret, of the five francs which he had given that very morning to the wretched girl. He returned to his garret in despair. He might have said to himself that M. Leblanc had promised to return that evening, and that then he must contrive to follow him better; but in his contemplation he had scarce heard him.

Just as he was going up the stairs he noticed, on the other side of the wall, Jondrette, wrapped up in the "philanthropist's" over-coat, and conversing with one of those ill-looking men who are usually called prowlers at the barrière. Though his preoccupation was so painful, he could not help saying to himself that the man to whom Jondrette was talking was like a certain Panchaud, *alias* Printanier, *alias* Bigrenaille, whom Courfeyrac had once pointed out to him, and who was regarded in the quarter as a very dangerous night-bird.

Marius ascended the stairs slowly, and at the moment when he was going to enter his cell he perceived behind him, in the passage, the elder of Jondrette's girls following him. This girl was odious in his sight, for it was she who had his five francs, but it was too late to ask them back from her, for both the hackney coach and the cab were now far away.

Marius went into his room and threw the door to after him, but it did not close; he turned and saw a hand in the aperture.

"Who's that?" he asked.

It was the girl.

"Oh! it's you!" Marius continued almost harshly. "What do you want of me?"

She seemed thoughtful, and no longer had her boldness of the morning; she did not come in, but stood in the dark passage.

"Monsieur Marius," she said, "you look sad; what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing. Leave me alone!"

Marius pushed the door again, but she still held it.

"Stay," she said, "you are wrong. Though you are not rich, you were kind this morning; now tell me what is the matter with you. It is easy to see that you are in sorrow. What can I do to prevent it? I do not ask for your secrets, and you need not tell them to me, but I may be of use to you. Surely I can help you, as I help my father."

An idea crossed Marius's mind, for no branch is despised when we feel ourselves falling. He walked up to the girl.

"Listen to me," he said; "you brought an old gentleman and his daughter here. Do you know their address?"

"No."

"Find it for me."

The girl's eye, which was dull, had become joyous, but now it became gloomy.

"Well, can you do it?" Marius said.

"You shall have the 'lovely young lady's' address."

She hung her head, and then closed the door with a hurried gesture; Marius fell into a chair, sunk in thoughts which he could not grasp, and suffering from a dizziness. All at once he was violently dragged out of his reverie, for he heard Jondrette's loud, hard voice uttering words full of the strangest interest for him.

"I tell you that I am sure, and that I recognized him."

Of whom was Jondrette talking, and whom had he recognized? M. Leblanc, the father of "his Ursule." What! did Jondrette know him? Was Marius going to obtain, in this sudden and unexpected fashion, all the information without which his life was obscure for himself? He bounded upon

the chest of drawers, and resumed his place at the aperture in the partition: once more he saw the interior of Jondrette's den. The man had evidently just returned, for he was out of breath; his daughters were seated, near the chimney-piece on the ground, the elder tying up the younger's hand. The mother was crouching on the bed near the fire-place, with an astonished face, while Jondrette was walking up and down the room with long strides and extraordinary eyes. The woman, who seemed frightened and struck with stupor before him, ventured to say,—

"What, really, are you sure?"

"Sure! it is eight years ago, but I recognized him at once. What! did it not strike you? He is better dressed, that's all! Ah! you mysterious old villain, I hold you!"

He stopped and said to his daughters,—

"Be off, you two!"—and as the girls went out he added, "You will be here at five o'clock precisely, both of you, for I shall want you."

When left alone with his wife, Jondrette began walking up and down the room again, and took two or three turns in silence. All at once he turned to his wife, folded his arms and exclaimed,—

"And shall I tell you something? The young lady—"

"Well, what?" the wife retorted.

Jondrette stooped down, and whispered,—

"It is she."

"That one?" the wife asked.

No expression could render all there was in the mother's *that one;* it was surprise, age, hatred, and passion mingled and combined in a monstrous intonation.

"It is not possible," she exclaimed; "when I think that my daughters go about barefooted, and have not a gown to put on!"

"And I tell you that it is; you will see."

At this absolute assertion the woman raised her large red and white face, and looked at the ceiling with a hideous expression. At this moment she appeared to Marius even more formidable than her husband, for she was a sow with the glance of a tigress.

She leaped off the bed, and stood for a moment unkempt, with swollen nostrils, parted lips, and clenched fists; then

she fell back again on the bed. The husband walked up and down, and paid no attention to his wife. After a short silence he went up to her, and stood in front of her with folded arms, as he had done a few moments previously.

"And shall I tell you something else?" he said in a low, guttural voice. "My fortune is made. I have had enough of this misery! I wish to eat when I am hungry, and drink when I am thirsty. I want to have my turn now, and mean to be a bit of a millionaire before I rot!"

"What do you mean?" his wife asked.

"What do I mean? listen!"

By a species of instinct, Jondrette lowered his voice, though not so low that his remarks escaped Marius.

"The Crœsus is trapped. He will come at six this evening to bring the sixty francs, the vagabond! Did you notice how I plummed him about my landlord on February 4th? Why, it is not a quarter-day, the ass! Well, he will come at six o'clock, and at that hour the neighbour has gone to dinner, and Mother Bougon is washing up dishes in town, so there will be no one in the house. The neighbour never comes in before eleven o'clock. The little ones will be on the watch, you will help us, and he will execute himself."

"And suppose he does not?" the wife asked. Jondrette made a sinister gesture, and said, "We will do it for him."

And he burst into a laugh: it was the first time that Marius saw him laugh, and this laugh was cold and gentle, and produced a shudder. Jondrette opened a cupboard near the fire-place, and took out an old cap, which he put on his head, after brushing it with his cuff.

"Now," he said, "I am going out, for I have some more people to see, good men. I shall be away as short a time as possible, for it is a famous affair; and do you keep house."

And pulling his cap over his eyes, he went out, but had only gone a short distance when the door opened again, and his sharp, intelligent face reappeared in the aperture.

"I forgot," he said. "Here is a five-franc piece; you will get a chafing-dish of charcoal ready."

"That will cost thirty sous, and with the rest I will buy some grub."

"Hang it, no. I have something to buy too."

"How much do you want?"

"From fifty sous to three francs."

"There won't be much left for dinner."

"Don't bother about eating to-day; there is something better to do."

Jondrette closed the door again, and then Marius heard his step as he went along the passage and down the stairs. It struck one at this moment from St. Medard's.

Marius, dreamer though he was, possessed a firm and energetic nature. His habits of solitary contemplation, by developing compassion and sympathy within him, had perhaps diminished the power of being irritated, but left intact the power of becoming indignant. Through the dark words which had been uttered he only saw one thing distinctly, that a snare was preparing, and that he must foil the hideous combinations of the Jondrettes by destroying their spider's web.

In the horror with which the Jondrettes filled him, he felt a species of joy at the idea that it might perhaps be in his power to render such a service to her whom he loved. But what was he to do? Should he wait for M. Leblanc at the gate at the moment when he arrived that evening and warn him of the snare? But Jondrette and his comrades would see him on the watch. The place was deserted, they would find means to get him out of the way and the man whom Marius wished to save would be lost. It had just struck one, and as the snare was laid for six o'clock, Marius had five hours before him. There was only one thing to be done; he put on his best coat, took his hat, and went out, making no more noise than if he were walking barefoot on moss.

Once outside the house, he turned into the Rue du Petit Banquier. About the middle of the street he found himself near a very low wall which surrounded unoccupied ground. He was walking slowly, deep in thought, and the snow deadened his footsteps, when all at once he heard voices talking close to him. Looking over the wall, he saw two men seated in the snow, conversing in a low voice. One was a bearded man in a blouse, and the other a hairy man in rags. By thrusting his head over them Marius could hear the hairy man say to the other, with a nudge,—

"With Patron Minette it cannot fail. It will be five hundred balls for each, and the worst that can happen is five years, six years, or ten at the most."

The other replied with some hesitation, and shuddering under his Greek cap,—

"That is a reality; and people must not go to meet things of that sort."

"I tell you that the affair cannot fail," the hairy man continued. "Father What's-his-name's trap will be all ready."

Then they began talking of a melodrama which they had seen on the previous evening at the Gaité.

Marius walked on; but it seemed to him that the obscure remarks of these men crouching in the snow must have some connection with Jondrette's abominable scheme. He went toward the Faubourg Saint Marceau, and asked at the first shop he came to where he could find a police commissary. He was told at No. 14, Rue de Pontoise, and he proceeded there.

On reaching No. 14 Rue de Pontoise, he went up to the first floor and asked for the commissary.

"He is not in at present," said some clerk, "but there is an inspector to represent him. Will you speak to him? is your business pressing?"

"Yes," said Marius.

The clerk led him to the commissary's office. A very tall man was leaning against the fender of a stove, and holding up with both hands the skirts of a mighty coat with three capes. He had a square face, thin and firm lips, thick greyish whiskers, and a look which seemed as if it was searching your pockets. This man did not appear much less ferocious or formidable than Jondrette; for sometimes it is just as dangerous to meet the dog as the wolf.

"What do you want?" he asked Marius.

"The police commissary."

"He is absent, but I represent him."

"It is a very secret and urgent affair."

"In that case speak quick."

This man inspired both fear and confidence. Marius told him of his adventure—that a person whom he only knew by sight was to be drawn that very evening into a trap—that the scoundrel's name who invented the snare was Jondrette—that Jondrettes daughters would be on the watch,—that there were no means of warning the threatened man, as not even his name was known—and that, lastly, all this would

come off at six in the evening, at the same deserted spot on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, in the house No, 50-52.

At this number the Inspector raised his head, and said coldly,—

" It must be in the room at the end of the passage. Patron Minette must be mixed up in this."

" Patron Minette ! " said Marius, " yes, I heard that name mentioned."

It is necessary here to state that at this time a quartette of bandits, Babet, Gueulemer, Claquesous, and Montparnasse governed the lowest depths of Paris. Gueulemer was a Hercules out of place, and his den was the Arch-Marion sewer. He was six feet high, had lungs of marble, and the bust of a Colossus—a low forehead, wide temples, rough short hair, and a bushy beard. Babet called himself a chemist, had shown phenomena at fairs, and possessed a booth with a trumpet and the following showboard, " Babet, dentist, and member of the academies, performs physical experiments on metals and metalloids, extirpates teeth, and undertakes stumps given up by the profession, one tooth, one franc, fifty centimes ; two teeth two francs ; three teeth two francs, fifty centimes : Take advantage of the opportunity." He was thin and learned—you might see the light through his bones, but not through his eyes. Claquesous was a nightbird. In the evening he emerged from a hole to which he returned before daybreak. He disappeared like a ghost, and when he appeared he seemed to issue from the ground. Montparnasse a lad not yet twenty, was the gamin turned pickpocket, and the pickpocket garrotter. He was genteel, effeminate, and graceful. He lived by robbery committed with violence. The cause of all his attacks was a longing to be well-dressed. The first grisette who said to him, " You are handsome," put the black spot in his heart, and made a Cain of this Abel. These four bandits formed a species of Proteus, winding through the police ranks and striving to escape the indiscreet glances of Vidocq, borrowing each others' names and tricks, and laying aside their personality as a man removes a false nose at a masquerade. *Patron Minette* was the name given in the subterranean lurking places to the association of these four men. In the old and fantastic popular language Patron Minette signifies the morning, and this

appellation was probably derived from the hour when the work of these malefactors finished, for dawn is the moment for spectres to fade away and bandits to part.

Marius told the Inspector of the dialogue between the hairy man and the bearded man in the snow behind the wall in the Rue du Petit Banquier. The Inspector growled,—

"The hairy man must be Burgon, and the bearded man Demi-liard, *alias* Deux Milliards."

"He was again looking down and meditating.

"50-52. I know the tenement. It is impossible for us to hide ourselves in the interior without the actors perceiving us, and then they would escape by putting off the farce. That won't do, for I want to hear them sing and make them dance."

This soliloquy ended, he turned to Marius, and asked, as he looked at him searchingly,—

"Would you be afraid of these men?"

"No more than I am of you," Marius answered roughly, for he was beginning to notice that this policeman had not yet said "Sir."

The Inspector looked at Marius more intently still, and continued, with a sort of sententious solemnity,—

"You speak like a brave man, and like an honest man. Courage does not fear crime, nor honesty the authorities."

Marius interrupted him,—

"That is all very well, but what do you intend doing?"

The Inspector restricted himself to saying,—

"The lodgers in that house have latch-keys to let themselves in at night. You have one? Have you it about you?"

"Yes."

"Give it to me," the Inspector said.

Marius took the key out of his waistcoat pocket, handed it to the Inspector, and added,—

"If you take my advice you will bring a strong force."

The Inspector gave Marius such a glance as Voltaire would have given a Provincial Academician who proposed to rhyme to him; then he thrust both hands into his immense coat-pockets and produced two small steel pistols, of the sort called "knock-me-down." He handed them to Marius, saying sharply,—

"Take these. Go home. Conceal yourself in your room, and let them suppose you out. They are loaded. You will

watch, as you tell me there is a hole in the wall. People will arrive; let them go on a little. When you fancy the matter ripe, and you think it time to stop it, you will fire a pistol, but not too soon. The rest concerns me. A shot in the air, in the ceiling, I don't care where,—but mind, not too soon. Wait till they begin to put the screw on. You are a lawyer, and know what that means. There is not a moment for any one to lose. What o'clock is it? Half-past two. You said seven?"

"Six o'clock," Marius corrected.

"I have time," the Inspector added; "but only just time. Do not forget anything I have said to you. A pistol-shot."

"All right," Marius replied.

And as he put his hand on the latch to leave the room the Inspector shouted to him,—

"By the way, if you should want me between this and then, come or send here. Ask for Inspector Javert."

Time was slipping away, and every evening Mame Bougon, when she went to wash up dishes in town, was accustomed to close the gate, and, as Marius had given his latch-key to the Inspector, it was important that he should be in time. He therefore hurried to No. 50-52, and the gate was still open when he arrived. He went up the stairs on tip-toe, and glided along the passage-wall to his room. This passage was bordered on either side by rooms which were now to let, and Mame Bougon, as a general rule, left the doors open. While passing one of these doors, Marius fancied that he could see in the uninhabited room four men's heads vaguely lit up by a remnant of day-light which fell through a window. Marius did not attempt to see, as he did not wish to be seen himself; and he managed to re-enter his room noiselessly and unseen. It was high time, for, a moment after, he heard Mame Bougon going out, and the house-gate shutting.

Marius sat down on his bed: it might be about half-past five, and only half an hour separated him from what was about to happen. He was not frightened, but he could not think without a certain tremor of the things that were going to take place. There was a light in Jondrette's room, and Marius could see the hole in the partition glowing with a ruddy brilliancy that appeared to him the colour of blood. It was evident that this light could not be produced by a candle.

There was no movement in the den, the silence was chilling and profound, and had it not been for the light, Marius might have fancied himself close to a grave. He gently took off his boots, and thrust them under the bed. Several minutes elapsed, and then Marius heard the house-gate creaking on it hinges, a heavy quick step ran up the stairs, and along the passage, it was Jondrette returned home. All at once several voices were raised, and it was plain that the whole family were at home.

"It is I," Jondrette said.

"Well?" the wife asked.

"All is well," Jondrette answered. Then, lowering his voice,—

"The mousetrap is open, and the cats are here."

He again lowered his voice and said,—

"Put this in the fire."

Marius heard some charcoal bars stirred with a pair of iron-pincers, or some steel instrument, and Jondrette ask,—

"Have you tallowed the hinges of the door, so that they may make no noise?"

"Yes," the mother answered.

'Has Mame Bougon gone?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure there is nobody in the neighbour's room?

He has not come in all day, and you know that this is his dinner hour."

"No matter," Jondrette added, "there is no harm in going to see whether he is in. Daughter, take the candle and go."

Marius fell on his hands and knees, and silently crawled under the bed; he had scarce done so ere he saw light through the cracks of his door.

"Papa," a voice exclaimed, "he is out."

He recognized the elder girl's voice.

"Have you been in his room?" the father asked.

"No," the girl replied, "but as his key is in his door he has gone out."

The father shouted—

"Go in all the same."

The door opened, and Marius saw the girl come in candle in hand. She walked straight up to the bed, and he suffered a moment of intense anxiety, but there was a looking-glass hanging from a nail by the bedside, and it was to that she pro-

ceeded. She smoothed her hair with her hand, and smiled in the glass.

Still Marius trembled, for he thought that she could not help hearing his breathing.

"Well?" asked the father, "what are you doing there?

"I am looking under the bed and the furniture," she said, as she continued to smooth her hair; "but there is nobody."

"You she-devil," the father yelled. "Come here directly, and lose no time."

She took a parting glance at the glass and went off, closing the door after her. A moment later Marius heard the sound of the girl's naked feet pattering along the passage, and Jondrette's voice shouting to them,—

"Pay attention! one at the barrière, and the other at the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier. Do not lose the gate of this house out of sight, and if you see anything come back at once—at once—you have a key to let yourselves in.

The elder daughter grumbled,—

"To stand sentry barefooted in the snow, what a treat!"

"To-morrow you shall have beetle-coloured silk boots," the father said.

They went down the stairs, and a few seconds later the sound of the gate closing below announced that they had reached the street.

CHAPTER XIV

Marius judged that the moment had arrived for him to return to his observatory. In a second, he was at the hole in the partition, and peeped through. The whole den was lit up with the ruddy glow of a brasier standing in the fire-place, and filled with incandescent charcoal. The burner was red, a bluish flame played round it, and rendered it easy to recognize the shape of the chisel purchased by Jondrette, which was heating in the charcoal. In a corner, near the door, could be seen two heaps, one apparently of old iron, the other of ropes, arranged for some anticipated purpose. The room, thus lit up, resembled a forge more than a mouth of Hades, but Jondrette, in this light, was more like a demon than a blacksmith.

Jondrette's den was admirably selected to serve as the scene of a violent and dark deed. It was the furthest room in

the most isolated house on the most deserted Parisian boulevard. The whole length of a house and a number of uninhabited rooms separated this lair from the boulevard, and the only window in it looked out on fields enclosed by walls and boardings. Jondrette had lit his pipe, was seated on the bottomless chair and smoking.

All at once he raised his voice.

"By the way, in such weather as this he will come in a hackney coach. Light your lamp and go down, and keep behind the front gate; when you hear the vehicle stop you will open the gate at once, light him up-stairs, and along the passage, and when he has come in here you will go down as quickly as you can, pay the coachman, and discharge him."

"Where's the money to come from?" the woman asked.

Jondrette felt in his pocket, and gave her five francs.

"What is this?" she exclaimed.

"The monarch which our neighbour gave us this morning;" and he added, "we shall want two chairs, though."

"What for?"

"Why, to sit down."

Marius shuddered on hearing the woman make the quiet answer,—

"Well, I will go and fetch our neighbour's."

And with a rapid movement she opened the door and stepped into the passage. Marius had not really the time to get off the drawers and hide under his bed.

"Take the candle," Jondrette shouted.

"No," she said, "it would bother me, for I have two chairs to carry. Besides, the moon is shining."

Marius heard the heavy hand of Mother Jondrette fumbling for his key in the darkness. The door opened, and the woman came in; the skylight sent a moon-beam between two large patches of shade, and one of these patches entirely covered the wall against which Marius was standing, so that he disappeared. Mother Jondrette did not see him, took the two chairs, and went off, noisily slamming the door after her. She re-entered the den.

"Here are the two chairs."

"And here is the lantern," the husband said, "make haste down."

He placed the chairs on either side of the table, turned the

chisel in the chafing-dish, placed in front of the fire-place an old screen, which concealed the charcoal-pan, and then went to the corner where the heap of rope lay, and stooped down as if examining something. Marius then perceived that what he had taken for a shapeless heap was a rope ladder, very well made with wooden rungs, and two hooks to hang it by. This ladder and a few large tools, perfect crowbars, which were mingled with the heap of old iron in the corner, had not been there in the morning, and had evidently been brought in the afternoon, during the absence of Marius.

"They are locksmith's tools," Marius thought.

There was in this room a hideous and menacing calm, and an expectation of something awful could be felt. Jondrette had let his pipe go out, a sign of deep thought, and had just sat down again. The candle caused the stern and fierce angles of his face to stand out; he was frowning, and suddenly thrust out his right hand now and then, as if answering the final counsels of a dark internal soliloquy. In one of the obscure replies he made to himself he opened the table drawer, took out a long carving-knife hidden in it, and felt its edge on his thumb nail. This done, he put the knife in the drawer, which he closed again. Marius, on his side, drew the pistol from his pocket, and cocked it, which produced a sharp, clicking sound. Jondrette started, and rose from his chair.

"Who's that?" he shouted.

Marius held his breath. Jondrette listened for a moment, and then said, laughingly,—

"What an ass I am! it is the partition creaking."

At this moment the distant and melancholy vibration of a bell shook the windows; six o'clock was striking at St. Medard's. Jondrette marked each stroke by a shake of the head, and when he had counted the last he snuffed the candle with his fingers. "I only hope he'll come," he growled, and then returned to his chair. He was hardly seated ere the door opened. Mother Jondrette had opened it, and remained in the passage making a horrible grimace, which one of the holes of the dark lantern lit up from below.

"Step in, sir," she said.

"Enter, my benefactor!" Jondrette repeated, as he hurriedly rose.

M. Leblanc appeared with that air of serenity which rendered

him singularly venerable, and laid four louis on the table.

"Monsieur Fabantou, here is the money for your rent, and something more to put you a little straight. After that we will see."

"May Heaven repay you! my generous benefactor," said Jondrette, and then rapidly approached his wife.

"Dismiss the hackney coach."

She slipped away, while her husband made an infinitude of bows, and offered a chair to M. Leblanc. A moment after she returned, and whispered in his ear, "All right!"

M. Leblanc was scarce seated ere Marius, raising his eyes, saw some one at the back of the room, whom he had not seen before. A man had just entered, but so softly that hinges had not been heard to creak. This man had on an old worn-out, torn violet knitted jacket, his neck was bare, his arms were naked and tattooed, and his face was daubed with black. He seated himself silently, and with folded arms, on the nearest bed, and, as he was behind Mother Jondrette, he could be but dimly distinguished. That sort of magnetic instinct which warns the eye caused M. Leblanc to turn almost at the same moment as Marius. He could not suppress a start of surprise, which Jondrette noticed.

"Ah, I see," Jondrette exclaimed, as he buttoned his coat complacently, "you are looking at your surtout? It really fits me capitally."

"Who is that man?" M. Leblanc asked.

"That?" said Jondrette, "oh, a neighbour; pay no attention to him."

M. Leblanc's whole person displayed a confident and intrepid candour, as he continued,—

"I beg your pardon, M. Fabantou?"

"Dear protector," Jondrette continued, as he placed his elbows on the table and gazed at M. Leblanc with eyes like those of a boa-constrictor, "we have been obliged to sell everything,—everything but this picture."

There was a slight noise at the door; a second man came in and seated himself on the bed behind Mother Jondrette.

"Take no heed," said Jondrette, "they are men living in the house. I was saying that I had a valuable picture left; look here, sir."

He rose, walked to the wall, against which the panel to

which we have already referred was leaning, and turned it round, while still letting it rest on the wall. It was something, in fact, that resembled a picture, and which the candle almost illumined. Marius could distinguish nothing, but he fancied he could catch a glimpse of a coarse daub, and a sort of principal character standing out of the canvas.

"A master-piece, a most valuable picture, my benefactor! I am as much attached to it as I am to my daughters, for it recalls dear memories; but, as I told you, and I will not go back from my word, I am willing to dispose of it, as we are in such poverty."

Either by accident, or some vague feeling of anxiety, M. Leblanc's eye, while examining the picture, returned to the end of the room. There were now four men there, all four bare-armed, motionless, and with blackened faces. Jondrette remarked that M. Leblanc's eyes rested on these men.

"They are neighbours," he said, "their faces are black because they are chimney-sweeps. Do not trouble yourself about them, sir, but buy my picture. What value do you set upon it?"

"Well," M. Leblanc said, looking Jondrette full in the face, like a man setting himself on guard, "it is some pot-house sign, and worth about three francs."

Jondrette replied gently,—

"Have you your pocket-book about you? I shall be satisfied with a thousand crowns."

M. Leblanc rose, set his back against the wall, and took a hurried glance round the room. He had Jondrette on his left by the window, and on his right the woman and the four men by the door. The four men did not stir, and did not even appear to see him.

"If you do not buy my picture, dear benefactor," Jondrette said, "I have no resource remaining, but to throw myself into the river. The other day I went for that purpose down three steps by the side of the bridge of Austerlitz." All at once his eyes glistened with a hideous radiance, the little man drew himself up and became frightful, he walked a step toward M. Leblanc, and shouted in a thundering voice,—

"That is not the point! Do you recognize me?"

The attic door was torn open, and three men in blue cloth blouses, and wearing masks of black paper, came in. The first

was thin, and carried an iron-shod cudgel; the second, a species of Colossus, held a pole-axe by the middle, while the third, a broad-shouldered fellow, was armed with an enormous key stolen from some prison-gate. It seemed as if Jondrette had been awaiting the arrival of these men, and a hurried conversation took place between him and the man with the cudgel.

"Is the trap ready?"

"Yes."

"With two good horses?"

"Excellent."

"All right," said Jondrette.

M. Leblanc was very pale. He looked all round the room like a man who understands into what a snare he has fallen. He had formed an improvised bulwark of the table, and this man, who a moment before merely looked like an old man, had suddenly become an athlete, and laid his robust fist on the back of his chair with a formidable gesture.

Three of the men posted themselves in front of the door, without saying a word. Marius thought that the moment for interference was at hand, and raised his right hand to the ceiling in the direction of the passage, ready to fire his pistol. Jondrette, after finishing his colloquy with the three men, turned again to M. Leblanc, and repeated the question, with that low, terrible laugh of his,—

"Do you not recognize me?"

M. Leblanc looked him in the face and answered, "No!"

Jondrette then went up to the table, he bent over the candle with folded arms, and placed his angular and ferocious face as close as he could to M. Leblanc's placid face, and in this posture of a wild beast which is going to bite, he exclaimed,—

"My name is not Fabantou or Jondrette, but my name is Thénardier, the landlord of the inn at Montfermeil! Do you hear me? Thénardier. Now do you recognize me?"

An almost imperceptible flush shot athwart M. Leblanc's forehead, and he answered, with his ordinary placidity, and without the slightest tremor in his voice,—

"No more than before."

Marius did not hear this answer. At the moment when Jondrette said, *My name is Thénardier*, he trembled in all his limbs, and leant against the wall, as if he felt a cold sword-

blade thrust through his heart. Then his right hand, raised in readiness to fire, slowly dropped, and his relaxing fingers almost let the pistol fall. This name, it will be remembered, was one of the pieties of his soul, and he blended it with his father's name in worship. What! His father's saviour was a bandit! His father commanded him from his tomb to do all in his power for Thénardier. During four years Marius had had no other idea but to pay this debt of his father's, and at the very moment when he was about to deliver over to justice a brigand, in the act of crime, destiny cried to him, "It is Thénardier!" and he was at length about to requite this man, for saving his father's life amid a hail-storm of grape-shot on the heroic field of Waterloo, by sending him to the scaffold! But, on the other hand, how could he witness a murder, and not prevent it? Could he be bound by any ties of gratitude to such a villain? He trembled, all depended on him, and he held in his hands the unconscious beings who were moving before his eyes. If he fired the pistol, M. Leblanc was saved, and Thénardier lost; if he did not fire, M. Leblanc was sacrificed, and Thénardier might, perhaps, escape. What should he do? On one side he fancied he could hear "his Ursule" imploring him for her father, on the other the Colonel recommending Thénardier to him. He felt as if he were going mad. His knees gave way under him, he was on the verge of fainting.

In the mean while Thénardier (we will not call him otherwise in future) was walking up and down before the table, with a sort of wild and frenzied triumph.

"Ah! I have found you again, my excellent philanthropist! my millionaire with the thread-bare coat! Ah, you do not recognize me. I suppose it wasn't you who came to my inn at Montfermeil just eight years ago, on the Christmas night of 1823! it wasn't you who carried off Fantine's child, the Lark! By heaven! you made a fool of me formerly, and are the cause of all my misfortunes. You got for fifteen hundred francs a girl who certainly belonged to rich parents, who had already brought me in a deal of money, and from whom I should have got an annuity! I suppose you thought me a precious fool when you went off with the Lark. You had your cudgel in the forest, and were the stronger. To-day I shall have my revenge, for I hold all the trumps; you are done, my good fellow."

M. Leblanc did not interrupt him, but said, when he ceased speaking,—

"I do not know what you mean. I am a very poor man and anything but a millionaire. I do not know you, and you take me for somebody else."

"Ah!" Thénardier said hoarsely, "a fine dodge! Ah, you do not remember, you do not see who I am!"

"Pardon me, sir," M. Leblanc replied, with a polite accent, "I see that you are a bandit."

At the word 'bandit," Mother Thénardier leaped from the bed, and her husband clutched a chair as if about to break it in his hand. "Don't stir, you," he shouted to his wife, and then turning to M. Leblanc, said,—

"Know this, my worthy philanthropist, I am not a doubtful man, or one whose name is unknown, and carries off children from houses! I am an ex-French soldier, and ought to have the cross! I was at Waterloo, and in the battle I saved the life of a General called the Comte de Pontmercy! The picture you see here, and which was painted by David at Bruqueselles, represents me, for David wished to immortalize the exploit. I have the General on my back, and I am carrying him through the grape-shot. That is the story! The General never did anything for me, but, for all that, I saved his life at the peril of my own, and I have my pockets filled with certificates of the fact. And now that I have had the goodness to tell you all this, let us come to a finish; I want money, an enormous amount of money, or I shall exterminate you, by the thunder of heaven."

Marius had gained a little mastery over his agony, and was listening. The last possibility of doubt had vanished, and it was really the Thénardier of the will. Marius shuddered at the charge of ingratitude cast at his father, and which he was on the point of justifying so fatally, and his perplexities were redoubled. When Thénardier regained breath, he fastened his blood-shot eyes on M. Leblanc, and said to him in a low sharp voice,—

"What have you to say before we put the handcuffs on you?"

M. Leblanc was silent. For some minutes past he seemed to be watching and following every movement of Thénardier, who, blinded by his own rage, was walking up and down the room, in the confidence of knowing the door guarded, of hold-

ing an unarmed man. M. Leblanc took advantage of an opportunity, when Thénardier's back was momentarily turned, upset the chair with his foot, the table with his fist, and with one bound was at the window. He was half out when six powerful hands seized him and dragged him back into the room. The three "chimney sweeps" had rushed upon him, and at the same time Mother Thénardier seized him by the hair. Other bandits ran in from the passage, and an old man on the bed, who seemed the worse for liquor, came up tottering with a road-mender's hammer in his hand. One of the sweeps, in whom Marius recognized, in spite of the blackening, Panchaud *alias* Printanier, *alias* Bigrenaille, raised above M. Leblanc's head a species of life-preserver, made of two lumps of lead at the ends of an iron bar. Marius could not resist this sight. "My father," he thought, "forgive me!" and his finger sought the trigger. He was on the point of firing, when Thénardier cried,—

"Do not hurt him."

A herculean struggle now commenced. With one blow of his fist in the chest M. Leblanc sent the old man rolling in the middle of the room, and then with two back-handers knocked down two other assailants, and held one under each of his knees. The villains groaned under this pressure as under a granite mill-stone, but the four others had seized the formidable old man by the arms and neck, and were holding him down upon the two "sweeps." Thus, M. Leblanc disappeared beneath this horrible group of bandits, like a boar attacked by a howling pack of dogs. They succeeded in throwing him on to the bed nearest the window, and held him down.

"You fellows," Thénardier exclaimed, "can search him."

M. Leblanc appeared to have given up all thought of resistance, and they searched him. He had nothing about him but a leathern purse containing six francs and his handkerchief. Thénardier put the latter in his own pocket.

"What! no pocket-book?" he asked.

"No, and no watch," one of the sweeps replied.

Thénardier went to the corner near the door, and took up some ropes, which he threw to them.

"Fasten him to the foot of the bed," he said.

The bandits tied him firmly in an upright posture to the end of the bed, furthest from the window and nearest the

"To gain time!" the prisoner thundered.

And at the same moment he shook off his bonds, which were cut through: the prisoner was only fastened to the bed by one leg. Ere the seven men had time to look about them, he had stretched out his hand towards the fire-place, and the Thénardiers and the brigands, driven back by surprise, saw him almost free, and in a formidable attitude, waving round his head the red-hot chisel, from which a sinister glare shot.

In the judicial inquiry that followed this affair it was stated that a large sou, cut and worked in a peculiar manner, was found in the garret. It was one of those marvels of industry which the patience of the bagne engenders in the darkness. The wretch who aspires to deliverance, finds means, without tools, or, at the most, with an old knife, to saw a sou in two, hollow out the two parts without injuring the dies, and form a thread in the edge of the sou, so that the sou may be reproduced. It screws and unscrews at pleasure, and is a box; and in this box a watch-spring saw is concealed, which, if well managed, will cut through fetters and iron bars. It is probable that at the moment when the bandits searched the prisoner he had the double sou about him, and hid it in his palm; and his right hand being at liberty afterwards, he unscrewed it, and employed the saw to cut the ropes. As, however, he was unable to stoop down for fear of betraying himself, he had not cut the cord on his left leg. The bandits gradually recovered from their surprise."

"Be easy," said Bigrenaille to Thénardier, "he is still held by one leg, and will not fly away. I put the pack-thread round that paw."

Here the prisoner raised his voice,—

"You are villains, but my life is not worth so much trouble to defend. As for imagining that with your heated irons you could make me speak or write what I do not wish,—"

He pulled up the sleeve of his left arm and added,—

"Look here!"

At the same time he stretched out his arm, and placed on the naked flesh the red-hot chisel, which he held in his right hand by the wooden handle. Then could be heard the frizzling of the burnt flesh, and the smell peculiar to torture-rooms spread through the garret. Marius tottered in horror, and the brigands themselves shuddered—but the face of the strange

old man was scarce contracted, and while the red-hot steel was burying itself in the smoking wound,—he impassive and almost august—fixed on Thénardier his beautiful glance, in which there was no hatred, and in which suffering disappeared in a serene majesty.

"Villains," he said, "be no more frightened of me than I am of you."

And, tearing the chisel out of the wound, he hurled it through the window, which had been left open. The horrible red-hot tool whirled through the night, and fell some distance off in the snow, which hissed at the contact. The prisoner continued,—

"Do to me what you like."

He was defenceless.

"Seize him," said Thénardier.

Two of the brigands laid their hands on his shoulders, and a masked man stood in front of him, ready to dash out his brains with a blow of the key at the slightest movement on his part. At the same time Marius heard below him, but so close that he could not see the speakers, the following remarks exchanged in a low voice,—

"There is only one thing to be done."

"Cut his throat!"

"Exactly."

It was the husband and wife holding council, and then Thénardier walked slowly to the table, opened the drawer and took out the knife. Marius clutched the handle of the pistol in a state of extraordinary perplexity. For above an hour he had heard two voices in his conscience, one telling him to respect his father's will, while the other cried to him to succour the prisoner. He had vaguely hoped up to this moment to find some mode of reconciling these two duties, but nothing possible had occurred to him. Still the peril pressed; for Thénardier, knife in hand, was reflecting a few paces from the prisoner. Marius looked wildly around him, which is the last mechanical resource of despair. All at once he started; at his feet on his table a bright moon-beam lit up and seemed to point out to him a sheet of paper. On this sheet he read this line, written in large letters that very morning by the elder of Thénardier's daughters,—

"HERE ARE THE SLOPS."

An idea, a flash, crossed Marius's mind ; this was the solution of the frightful problem that tortured him, sparing the assassin and saving the victim. He knelt down on the chest of drawers, stretched forth his arm, seized the paper, softly detached a lump of plaster from the partition, wrapped it up in the paper, and threw it through the hole into the middle of the den. It was high time, for Thénardier had overcome his last fears, or his last scruples, and was going towards the prisoner.

" There's something falling," his wife cried.

The woman bounded forward, and picked up the lump of plaster wrapped in paper, which she handed to her husband.

" How did it get there ? " Thénardier asked.

" Why, hang it," his wife asked, " how do you expect that it did ? through the window of course."

Thénardier rapidly unfolded the paper, and held it close to the candle.

" Eponine's handwriting,—the devil !"

He made a signal to his wife, who hurried up to him, and showed her the line written on the paper, then added in a hollow voice,—

" Quick, the ladder ! we must leave the bacon in the trap."

" Which way ? " Bigrenaille remarked.

" By the window," Thénardier replied ; " as Ponine threw the stone through the window, that's a proof that the house is not beset on that side."

The brigands who held the prisoner let him go, and in a twinkling the rope ladder was dropped out of the window and securely fastened to the sill by the two iron hooks. So soon as the ladder was fixed Thénardier cried,—

" The lady first."

And he dashed at the window, but as he was stepping out, Bigrenaille roughly seized him by the collar.

" No, no, my old joker, after us ! " he said.

" You are children," said Thénardier, " we are losing time, and the police are at our heels."

" Very well then," said one of the bandits, " let us draw lots as to who shall go first."

Thénardier exclaimed,—

" Are you mad ? draw lots, eh ? with a wet finger ? a short straw ? write our names and put them in a cap— ? "

" May I offer my hat ? " a voice said at the door.

All turned ; it was Javert, who held his hat in his hand and offered it smilingly.

The startled bandits dashed at the weapons, which they had thrown into corners at the moment of their attempted escape ; and in less than a second, these seven men were grouped in a posture of defence, one with his pole-axe, another with his key, a third with his life-preserver, the others with chisel, pincers, and hammer, and Thénardier with his knife in his fist. The woman picked up an enormous paving-stone which lay in the corner of the room, and served her daughter as a foot-stool. Javert restored his hat to his head, and walked into the room, with folded arms, his cane hanging from his wrist, and his sword in his scabbard.

" Halt ! " he shouted, " you will not leave by the window, but by the door. You are seven, and we are fifteen, so do not let us quarrel, but behave as gentlemen."

Bigrenaille drew a pistol from under his blouse, and placed it in Thénardier's hand, as he whispered,—

" It is Javert, and I dare not fire at that man. Dare you ? "

" I should think so," Thénardier answered.

Thénardier took the pistol and aimed at Javert ; the Inspector, who was only three paces from him, looked at him fixedly, and contented himself with saying,—

" Don't fire, for the pistol won't go off."

Thénardier pulled the trigger, there was a flash in the pan.

" Did I not tell you so ? " Javert remarked.

Bigrenaille threw his life-preserver at Javert's feet.

" You are the Emperor of the devils, and I surrender," he exclaimed. " I only ask one thing, that my 'baccy mayn't be stopped while I'm in solitary confinement."

" Granted," said Javert.

Then he turned and shouted, " You can come in now."

A squad of police, sword in hand, and agents armed with bludgeons and sticks, rushed in at Javert's summons and bound the robbers. This crowd of men, scarce illumined by the candle, filled the den with shadows.

" Handcuff them all," Javert cried.

At this moment he noticed the prisoner, who had not said a word since the arrival of the police, and held his head down.

" Untie the gentleman," said Javert, " and let no one leave the room.

After saying this he sat down in a lordly way at the table, on which the candle and the ink-stand were still standing, took a stamped paper from his pocket, and began writing his report. When he had written a few lines, which are always the same formula, he raised his eyes.

"Bring the gentleman here whom these gentlemen had tied up."

The agents looked around.

"Well," Javert asked, "where is he?"

The prisoner had disappeared. The door was guarded, but the window was not. So soon as he found himself released and while Javert was writing, he took advantage of the tumult, the crowd, the darkness, to rush to the window. An agent ran up and looked out; he could see nobody, but the rope-ladder was still trembling.

"The devil!" said Javert between his teeth, "he must have been the best of the lot."

On the day after that in which these events occurred in the house on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, a lad was trudging along the right-hand walk in the direction of the Barrière de Fontainebleau, at about nightfall. This boy was pale, thin, dressed in rags, wearing canvas trowsers in the month of February, and singing at the top of his lungs.

He reached No. 50-52, and finding the gate closed, he began giving it re-echoing kicks, which indicated rather the shoes of the man which he wore than the feet of the boy which he had. An old woman, Madame Bougon, ran up after him, uttering shouts, and making the most extraordinary gestures.

"What's the matter? what's the matter? O Lord, the house is being broken into."

"All at once she stopped, for she had recognized the gamin.

"Why, it is that Satan! There's nobody here, scamp.

"Where's father?"

"At La Force.

"Hilloh! and mother?"

"At Saint Lazare."

"Very fine! and my sisters?"

"At the Madelonnettes."

Then he turned on his heels, and a moment later the old woman who was standing in the gateway. heard him singing in his

clear young voice, as he went off under the elms which were quivering in the winter breeze,—

"Le Roi Coup de sabot
S'en allait à la chasse,
A la chasse aux corbeaux.
Monté sur des échasses,
Quand on passait dessou
On lui payait deux sous."

CHAPTER XV

MARIUS witnessed the unexpected dénouement of the snare upon whose track he had placed Javert, but the Inspector had scarce left the house, taking his prisoners with him in three hackney coaches, ere Marius stepped out of the house in his turn. It was only nine in the evening, and Marius went to call on Courfeyrac, who was no longer the imperturbable inhabitant of the Pays Latin. He had gone to live in the Rue de la Verrière, "for political reasons," and this district was one of those in which insurrectionists of the day were fond of installing themselves. Marius said to Courfeyrac, "I am going to sleep here," and Courfeyrac pulled off one of his two mattresses, laid it on the ground, and said, "There you are!" At seven o'clock the next morning Marius returned to No. 50-52, paid his quarter's rent, and what he owed to Mame Bougon, had his books, bed, table, chest of drawers, and two chairs, placed on a truck, and went away, without leaving his address, so that, when Javert returned in the morning to question Marius about the event of the previous evening, he only found Mame Bougon, who said to him,—"Gone away." Mame Bougon was convinced that Marius was in some way an accomplice of the robbers arrested the previous evening. "Who would have thought it!" she exclaimed to the porteresses of the quarter, "a young man whom you might have taken for a girl!"

Marius's reason for moving so promptly, was that he did not wish to figure at the trial which would in all probability ensue, and be obliged to give evidence against Thénardier. Javert believed that the young man, whose name he forgot, had been frightened, and had run away, or else had not even returned home; he made some efforts, however, to find him, which were unsuccessful. A month elapsed, then another.

Marius was still living with Courfeyrac, and had learned from a young barrister, an habitual walker of the Salle des Pas Perdus, that Thénardier was in solitary confinement, and every Monday he left a five-franc piece for him at the wicket of Fa Lorce. Marius, having no money left, borrowed the five francs of Courfeyrac; it was the first time in his life that he borrowed money.

Marius, however, was heart-broken, for everything had disappeared again under a trap-door. He had seen again momentarily the girl whom he loved, and the old man who appeared her father. He no longer knew the name of which he had felt so certain, and it certainly was not Ursule, and the Lark was a nick-name; and then, what must he think of the old man? Did he really hide himself from the police? The white-haired workman whom Marius had met in the vicinity of the Invalides reverted to his mind, and it now became probable that this workman and M. Leblanc were one and the same. He disguised himself then, and this man had his heroic side and his equivocal side. Why did he not call for help? why did he fly? was he the father of the girl? and was he really the man whom Thénardier fancied he recognized? These were all so many insoluble problems. All this, it is true, in no way lessened the angelic charm of the maiden of the Luxembourg, and hence arose the poignant distress. Marius had a passion in his heart, and night over his eyes. He was impelled, he was attracted, he could not stir; all had vanished, except love, and he had lost the sudden instincts and illuminations of even that love.

Javert's triumph at the Maison Gorbeau had seemed complete, but was not so. In the first place, and that was his chief anxiety, Javert had not been able to make a prisoner of the prisoner: the assassinated man who escapes is more suspicious than the assassin, and it was probable that this man who escaped, though a precious capture for the bandits, might be equally so for the authorities. Next, Montparnasse, who was to have played his part in the affair of that night, had slipped out of Javert's clutches, Montparnasse, in fact, having met Eponine on the boulevard, keeping watch, went off with her, preferring to play the Nemorino with the daughter rather than Schinderhannes with the father, and it was lucky for him that he did so, as he was now free. Javert afterwards "nailed"

Eponine, but as there was no charge against her, she was soon allowed to go. Lastly, in the drive from No. 50-52 to La Force, one of the chief men arrested, Claquesous, had disappeared; no one knew how he did it, and the sergeants and agents did not at all understand it: no one could say anything except that on reaching the prison there was no Claquesous. Had this Sphynx its front paws in crimes, and its hind paws in the police? Javert did not accept these combinations, and struggled against such compromises; but his squad contained other inspectors besides himself, and, though his subordinates, perhaps more thoroughly initiated in the secrets of the Prefecture, and Claquesous was such a villain that he might be a very excellent agent. However this might be, Claquesous was lost, and Javert seemed more irritated than surprised. As for Marius, "that scrub of a barrister," whose name he had forgotten, Javert did not trouble himself much about him, and besides, a barrister can always be found. But was he only a barrister?

Marius no longer called on any one, but at times he came across Father Mabœuf. The Flora of Cauteretz did not sell at all now, and the indigo experiments had not been successful in the little garden of Austerlitz, which looked in a bad direction. M. Mabœuf could only cultivate in it a few rare plants which are fond of moisture and shade. For all that, though, he was not discouraged: he had obtained a strip of ground at the Jardin des Plantes, on which to carry on his experiments "at his own charge." To do this he pledged the plates of his *Flora* and he reduced his breakfast to two eggs, of which he left one for his old servant, whose wages he had not paid for fifteen months past. And very frequently his breakfast was his sole meal. He no longer laughed with his childish laugh, he had grown morose, and declined to receive visitors, and Marius did well not to call on him. At times, at the hour when M. Mabœuf proceeded to the Jardin des Plantes, the old man and the young man passed each other on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital; they did not speak, and merely shook their heads sorrowfully. It is a sad thing that the moment arrives when misery parts friends.

M. Mabœuf at this period was close on eighty years of age.

One evening he had a strange apparition. He had returned home while it was still daylight, and found that Mother Plutarch, whose health was not so good as it might be, had gone

to bed. He dined upon a bone on which a little meat remained and a lump of bread which he had found on the kitchen table, and was seated on a stone post which acted as a bench in his garden. M. Mabœuf was reading, with the help of his spectacles, a book in which he took great interest, for his natural timidity rendered him prone to accept superstitions. This book was the celebrated treatise of President Delancre, "On the Inconstancy of Delusions." While reading M. Mabœuf looked over the book, which he held in his hand, at his plants, and among others at a magnificent rhododendron, which was one of his consolations. Four days of wind and sun had passed without a drop of rain, the stems were bending, the buds drooping, the leaves falling, and they all required watering; this rhododendron especially looked in a very sad way. M. Mabœuf was one of those men for whom plants have souls; he had been at work all day in his indigo patch, and was worn out with fatigue, but for all that he rose, laid his book on the bench, and walked in a bent posture, and with tottering steps, up to the well. But when he seized the chain he had not sufficient strength to unhook it; he then turned and took a glance of agony at the sky, which was glittering with stars. The night promised to be as dry as the day had been.

"Stars everywhere!" the old man thought, "not the smallest cloud! not a drop of water!"

He tried once again to unhook the well-chain, but could not succeed; at this moment he heard a voice, saying,—

"Father Mabœuf, shall I water the garden for you?" At the same time a sound like that of a wild beast breaking through was heard in the hedge, and he saw a tall thin girl emerge, who stood before him looking at him boldly. She looked less like a human being than some form engendered of the darkness. Ere Father Mabœuf found time to answer a syllable, this creature, whose movements had in the gloom a sort of strange suddenness, had unhooked the chain, let down and drawn up the bucket, and filled the watering-pot; and the old gentleman saw this apparition, which was bare-footed and wore a ragged skirt, running along the flower-beds and distributing life around her. The sound of the water pattering on the leaves filled M. Mabœuf's soul with ravishment, and the rhododendron now seemed to him to be happy. The first

bucket emptied, the girl drew a second, then a third, and watered the whole garden. When she had finished, Father Mabœuf went up to her with tears in his eyes, and laid his hand on her forehead.

"GOD will bless you," he said "you are an angel, since you take care of flowers. What a pity that I am so unhappy and so poor, and can do nothing for you!"

"You can do something," she said. "Tell me where M. Marius lives."

The old man did not understand. He raised his glassy eyes, and seemed seeking something which had vanished.

"A young man who used to come here."

"Ah, yes," he exclaimed, "I know whom you mean. Wait a minute? Monsieur Marius, Baron Marius Pontmercy, pardieu! lives, or rather he does not live——well, I do not know."

While speaking, he had stooped to straighten a rhododendron branch, and continued,—

"Ah yes, I remember now. He passes very frequently along the boulevard, and goes in the direction of the Lark's Field in the Rue Croule Barbe. Look for him there, he will not be difficult to find."

When M. Mabœuf raised his head again, he was alone, and the girl had disappeared. He was decidedly a little frightened.

"Really," he thought, "if my garden were not watered, I should fancy that it was a ghost."

A few days after this visit of a ghost to Father Mabœuf—it was on a Monday, the day of the five-franc piece which Marius borrowed of Courfeyrac for Thénardier, Marius placed the coin in his pocket, and before carrying it to the prison, resolved to "take a little walk," hoping that on his return this would make him work. As soon as he rose, he sat down before a book and paper to set about some translation, and his job at this time was the translation into French of a celebrated German quarrel, the controversy between Gans and Savigny. He took up Gans, he took up Savigny, read four pages, tried to write one, but could not, and got up from his chair, saying, "I will go out, that will put me in the humour;" and he proceeded to the Lark's Field, the mere name of which attracted him, because it reminded him of her whom he no longer saw, and he lived in it more than at Courfeyrac's lodging. On this morning the merry sunbeams were flashing through the ex-

panded and luminous leaves. He thought of "Her," and his reverie, becoming a reproach, fell back on himself; he thought bitterly of the indolence and mental paralysis which were gaining on him, and of the night which constantly grew denser before him, so that he could no longer even see the sun. All at once he heard amid his poignant ecstasy a familiar voice saying,—

"Ah! here he is!"

He raised his eyes and recognized the unhappy girl who had come to him one morning,, Eponine, the elder of Thénardier's daughters. She had stopped in front of Marius with a little joy on her livid face, and something like a smile, and it was some minutes ere she could speak.

"I have found you!" she said at last. "Father Mabœuf was right. Oh, how I have looked for you the last six weeks! So you no longer live down there?"

"No," said Marius.

"Ah, I understand, on account of that thing. Hilloh, why do you wear an old hat like that? A young man like you ought to be handsomely dressed. M. Mabœuf calls you Baron Marius—I forget what; but you are not a Baron, are you? Barons are old swells, who walk in front of the Luxembourg Palace, where there is the most sun, and read the *Quotidienne* for a sou. Tell me, where do you live now?"

Marius did not answer.

"If I liked, I could compel you to look pleased."

"What do you mean?" Marius asked.

She looked at M. Marius intently and said, "I have the address."

Marius turned pale, and all his blood flowed to his heart.

"What address?"

"The young lady's."

Marius leapt from the parapet on which he was sitting, and wildly seized her hand.

"Oh! lead me to it! tell me! where is it?"

"Come with me," she answered; "I don't exactly know the street or the number, and it is quite on the other side of town, but I know the house well, and will take you to it."

She withdrew her hand, and continued in a tone which would have made an observer's heart bleed, but did not at all affect the transported lover, "Oh, how pleased you are!"

A cloud passed over Marius's forehead, and he clutched Eponine's arm.

"Your father! promise me, Eponine, swear to me that you will never tell your father that address."

She turned to him with an air of stupefaction. "Eponine! how do you know that is my name?"

Marius seized both her arms.

"Answer me in Heaven's name—swear to me that you will not tell your father the address which you know."

"Let me go!" she said, as she burst into a laugh, "how you are shaking me! Yes, yes, I promise it, I swear it! how does it concern me? I will not tell my father the address."

"And no one else?" said Marius.

"And no one else."

"Now," Marius continued, "lead me there."

"Come on! Oh, how glad he is!" she said.

A few yards further on she stopped.

"By the bye, you know that you promised me something?

Marius felt in his pocket; he had nothing in the world but the five-franc piece destined for Father Thénardier, but he laid the coin in Eponine's hand. She let it slip through her fingers on the ground, and looking at him frowningly, said,—

"I do not want your money."

About the middle of the last century a President of the Parliament of Paris who kept a mistress under the rose, for at that day the nobility displayed their mistresses and the bourgeois concealed theirs, had "a small house," built in the Faubourg St. Germain, in the deserted Rue de Blomet, which is now called Rue Plumet, and not far from the spot which was formerly known as the "fight of animals." This house consisted of a pavilion only one storey in height, there were two sitting-rooms on the ground-floor, two bed-rooms on the first, a kitchen below, a boudoir above, an attic beneath the roof, and the whole was surrounded by a large garden with railings looking out on the street. This was all that passers-by could see. But behind the pavilion was a narrow yard, with an outhouse containing two rooms, where a nurse and a child could be concealed if necessary. In the back of this outhouse was a secret door leading into a long, paved winding passage, open to the sky, and bordered by two lofty walls. This passage,

concealed with prodigious art, and, as it were, lost between the garden walls, whose every turn and winding it followed, led to another secret door, which opened about a quarter of a mile off, almost in another quarter, at the solitary end of the Rue de Babylone. The President went in by this door, so that even those who might have watched him, and observed that he mysteriously went somewhere every day, could not have suspected that going to the Rue de Babylone was going to the Rue Blomet. By clever purchases of ground, the ingenious magistrate had been enabled to make this hidden road upon his own land, and consequently uncontrolled.

In October, 1829, a middle-aged man presented himself and took the house as it stood, including of course the outhouse and the passage leading to the Rue de Babylone, and he had the two secret doors of this passage put in repair. The house was still furnished much as the President had left it, so the new tenant merely ordered a few necessary articles, had the paving of the yard put to rights, new stairs put in, and the windows mended, and eventually installed himself there with a young girl and an old woman, without any disturbance, and rather like a man slipping in than one entering his own house. The neighbours, however, did not chatter, for the simple reason that he had none.

The tenant was in reality Jean Valjean, and the girl was Cosette. The domestic was a female of the name of Toussaint, whom Jean Valjean had saved from the hospital and wretchedness, and who was old, rustic, and stammered, three qualities which determined Jean Valjean on taking her with him. He hired the house in the name of M. Fauchelevent, annuitant. In all we have recently recorded the reader will have doubtless recognized Valjean even sooner than Thénardier did. Why had he left the convent of the Little Picpus? Jean Valjean was happy in it. He saw Cosette daily, he said to himself that she was his, that no power on earth could rob him of her, that she would certainly become a nun, as she was daily gently urged to it, that henceforth the convent was the world for him as for her, that he would grow old in it and she grow up, that she would grow old and he die there; and that, finally, no separation was possible. While reflecting on this, he said to himself that this child had the right to know life before renouncing it. And who knew whether Cosette, some

lay meditating on this, and feeling herself a reluctant nun, might not grow to hate him? It was a last thought, almost selfish, and less heroic than the others, but it was insupportable to him. He resolved to leave the convent.

On leaving it he carried with his own hands, and would not intrust to any porter, the small valise, of which he always had the key about him. This valise perplexed Cosette, owing to the aromatic smell which issued from it. Cosette called this valise the inseparable, and said, "I am jealous of it." Jean Valjean, however, felt a profound anxiety when he returned to the outer air. He discovered the house in the Rue Plumet, and hid himself in it, henceforth remaining in possession of the name of Ultime Fauchelevent. At the same time he had hired two other lodgings in Paris, so that he might attract less attention than if he had always remained in the same quarter; and that he might not be taken unaware, as on the night when he so miraculously escaped from Javert. These two lodgings were of a very mean appearance, and in two quarters very distant from each other, one being in the Rue de l'Ouest, the other in the Rue de l'Homme-armé. He spent a few weeks now and then at one or the other of these lodgings, taking Cosette with him, and leaving Toussaint behind.

Properly speaking, however, Jean Valjean's house was at the Rue Plumet, and he had arranged his existence there in the following fashion:—Cosette and the servant occupied the pavilion, she had the best bed-room, with the painted press, the boudoir with the gilt beading, the President's drawing-room with its hangings and vast easy chairs, and the garden. All through the winter Cosette's small house was warmed from top to bottom, while Valjean himself lived in the sort of porter's lodge at the end of the back yard, which was furnished with a mattress and common bedstead, a deal table, two straw-bottomed chairs, an earthenware water-jug, a few books on a plank, and his dear valise in a corner, but he never had any fire. He dined with Cosette, and black bread was put on the table for him; and he said to Toussaint, when she came, "This young lady is mistress of the house." "And you, sir?" Toussaint replied, quite stupefied. "Oh! I am much better than the master,—I am the father."

Cosette had been taught house-keeping in the convent, and checked the expenses, which were very small. Daily

Jean Valjean took Cosette for a walk, leading her to the most sequestered allée of the Luxembourg, and every Sunday they attended Mass at the Church of St. Jacques du Haut-pas, because it was a long distance off. As it is a very poor district, he gave away a considerable amount of alms, which caused Thénardier to head his letter to him in the way we have seen. He was fond of taking Cosette to visit the indigent and the sick, but no stranger ever entered the house in the Rue Plumet. Toussaint bought the provision, and Jean Valjean himself fetched the water from a fountain close by, on the boulevard. The wood and wine were kept in a semi-subterranean building covered with rock-work, near the door in the Rue Babylone, and which had formerly served the President as a grotto, for in the age of the Follies and small houses, love was not possible without a grotto. In the door opening on the Rue Babylone there was a letterbox, but, as the inhabitants of the house in the Rue Plumet received no letters, this box, once on a time the go-between in amourettes, and the confidant of a love-sick lawyer, was now only of service to receive the tax-papers and the guard-summonses. For M. Fauchelevent, annuitant, belonged to the National Guard, and had been unable to escape the close meshes of the census of 1831. The municipal inquiries made at that period extended even to the convent of the Little Picpus, when Jean Valjean emerged venerable in the sight of the Major, and consequently worthy of mounting guard. Three or four times a year Jean Valjean donned his uniform and went on duty, and did so readily enough, for it was a disguise which enabled him to mix with everybody, while himself remaining solitary. Jean Valjean had attained his sixtieth year, or the age of legal exemption; but he did not look more than fifty; besides, he had no wish to escape his Sergeant-major and cheat Count Lobau. He had no civil status, hid this name, his identity, his age, everything, and, as we just said, he was a willing National Guard; all his ambition was to resemble the first comer who pays taxes. The ideal of his man was internally an angel, externally a bourgeois.

All three never left the house except by the gate in the Rue de Babylone; and unless they were noticed through the garden gate it would be difficult to guess that they lived in the Rue Plumet. This gate was always locked, and Jean

Valjean left the garden untended, that it might not be noticed. In this, perhaps, he deceived himself.

Cosette left the convent while still almost a child. She was but little more than fourteen, and at the "ungrateful age," as we may say. With the exception of her eyes, she seemed rather ugly than pretty; still she had no ungraceful feature, but she was awkward, thin, timid and bold at the same time, in short, a grown-up little girl. Her education was finished, that is to say, she had been taught religion, and more especially devotion, also "history," that is to say, the thing so called in a convent; geography, grammar, the participles, the kings of France, and a little music, drawing, etc.; but in other respects she was ignorant of everything, which is at once a charm and a peril.

She loved her father, that is to say, Jean Valjean, with all her soul, with a simple filial passion, which rendered the worthy man a desired and delightful companion to her. Our readers will remember that M. Madeleine was fond of reading, and Jean Valjean continued in the same track; he had learned to speak well, and he possessed the eloquence of a humble, true, and self-cultivated intellect. During their *tête-à-têtes* in the Luxembourg garden he gave her long explanations about all sorts of things, deriving his information from what he had read, and also from what he had suffered. While Cosette was listening to him her eyes vaguely wandered around. This simple man was sufficient for Cosette's thoughts, in the same way as the wild garden was for her eyes. When she had chased the butterflies for a while she would run up to him panting, and say, "Oh! how tired I am!" and he would kiss her forehead. Cosette adored this good man, and she was ever at his heels, for wherever Jean Valjean was, happiness was. As he did not live either in the pavilion or the garden, she was more attached to the paved back-yard than to the flower-laden garden, and preferred the little outhouse with the straw chairs to the large drawing-room hung with tapestry, along which silk-covered chairs were arranged. Jean Valjean at times said to her with the smile of a man who is delighted to be annoyed,—"Come, go to your own rooms! leave me at peace for a little while."

So long as Cosette was young Jean Valjean readily talked to her about her mother, but when she grew up it was im-

possible for him to do so—he felt as if he dared not do it. Was it on account of Cosette or of Fantine? He felt a species of religious horror at making this shadow enter Cosette's thoughts, and rendering a dead woman third person in their society. The more sacred this shade was to him, the more formidable was it. He thought of Fantine, and felt himself overwhelmed by the silence. He saw vaguely in the darkness something that resembled a finger laid on a lip. Had all the modesty which was in Fantine, and which, during her existence, came out of her violently, returned after her death, to watch indignantly over the dead woman's peace, and sternly guard her in the tomb? was Jean Valjean himself unconsciously oppressed by it? We who believe in death are not prepared to reject this mysterious explanation, and hence arose the impossibility of pronouncing, even to Cosette, the name of Fantine One day Cosette said to him,—

"Father, I saw my mother last night in a dream. She had two large wings, and in life she must have been a sainted woman."

"Through martyrdom," Jean Valjean replied. Altogether, though, he was happy. Jean Valjean felt his thoughts melt into delight at all the marks of Cosette's exclusive tenderness, so satisfied with himself alone. The poor wretch, inundated with an angelic joy, trembled; he assured himself with transports that this would last his whole life; he said to himself that he had not really suffered enough to deserve such radiant happiness, and he thanked God, in the depths of his soul, for having allowed him, villain as he was, to be thus loved by an innocent being.

One day Cosette happened to look at herself in the glass, and said, "Good gracious!" She fancied that she was almost pretty, and this threw her into a singular trouble. Up to this moment she had not thought of her face, and though she saw herself in the mirror she did not look at herself. And, then, she had often been told that she was ugly; Jean Valjean alone would say gently, "Oh no, oh no!" However this might be, Cosette had always believed herself ugly, and had grown up in this idea with the facile resignation of childhood. And now all at once her looking-glass said to her, as Jean Valjean had done, "Oh no!" And she was really beautiful. Her waist was formed, her skin had grown white, her hair was glossy, and an unknown splendour was lit up in her

blue eyes. The consciousness of her beauty came to her fully in a minute, like the sudden dawn of day. She returned to the garden, believing herself a queen, hearing the birds sing, though it was winter, seeing the golden sky, the sun amid the trees, flowers on the shrubs; she was wild, distraught, and in a state of ineffable ravishment. On his side, Jean Valjean experienced a profound and inexplicable contraction of the heart; for some time past, in truth, he had contemplated with terror the beauty which daily appeared more radiant in Cosette's sweet face. It was a laughing dawn for her, but most mournful for him.

From the day when Cosette said to herself, "I am decidedly good-looking," she paid attention to her toilet. With faith in her beauty, all her feminine soul was expanded within her; she had a horror of merinos, and felt ashamed of plush. Her father never refused her anything, and she knew at once the whole science of the hat, the dress, the mantle, the slipper, and the sleeve, of the fabric that suits, and the colour that is becoming, the science which makes the Parisian woman something so charming, profound, and dangerous. In less than a month little Cosette was in this Thebaïs of the Rue de Babylone, not only one of the prettiest women, which is something, but one of the best dressed in Paris, which is a great deal more. However, by the simple inspection of Cosette's toilet, a woman would have seen that she had no mother. Certain small proprieties and social conventionalisms were not observed by Cosette; a mother, for instance, would have told her that an unmarried girl does not wear brocade.

Cosette, knowing herself to be beautiful, lost the grace of being ignorant of the fact, an exquisite grace, for beauty heightened by simplicity is ineffable, and nothing is so adorable as a beauteous innocent maiden, who walks along unconsciously, holding in her hand the key of a Paradise. But what she lost in ingenuous grace she regained in a pensive and serious charm. Her whole person, impregnated with the joys of youth, innocence, and beauty, exhaled a splendid melancholy. It was at this period that Marius saw her again at the Luxembourg, after an interval of six months.

The power of a glance has been so abused in love-romances that it has been discredited in the end, and a writer dares hardly assert now-a-days that two beings fell in love because

they looked at each other. And yet that is the way, and the sole way, in which people fall in love; the rest is merely the rest, and comes afterwards. Nothing is more real than the mighty shocks which two souls give each other by exchanging this spark. At the hour when Cosette unconsciously gave that glance which troubled Marius, Marius did not suspect that he too gave a glance which troubled Cosette. For a long time she had seen and examined him in the way girls see and examine, while looking elsewhere. Marius was still thinking Cosette ugly, when Cosette had already considered Marius handsome, but as the young man paid no attention to her he was an object of indifference. Still she could not refrain from saying to herself that he had silky hair, fine eyes, regular teeth, an agreeable voice, when she heard him talking with his companions, that he perhaps walked badly, but with a grace of his own, that he did not appear at all silly, that his whole person was noble, gentle, simple, and proud, and lastly, that though he seemed poor he had the bearing of a gentleman.

On the day when their eyes met, and at length suddenly said to the other the first obscure and ineffable things which the eye stammers, Cosette did not understand it at first. She returned pensively to the house in the Rue de l'Ouest, where Jean Valjean was spending six weeks, according to his wont. When she awoke the next morning she thought of the young stranger, so long indifferent and cold, who now seemed to pay attention to her, an attention which at first did not appear at all agreeable to her, for she felt a little angry with the handsome, disdainful man. Our readers will remember Marius's hesitations, palpitations, and terrors; he remained on his bench, and did not approach, and this vexed Cosette. One day she said to Jean Valjean, "Father, suppose we take a walk in that direction?" Seeing that Marius did not come to her, she went to him, for, in such cases, every woman resembles Mahomet. And then, strange it is, the first symptom of true love in a young man is timidity; in a girl it is boldness. This will surprise, and yet nothing is more simple; the two sexes have a tendency to approach, and each assumes the qualities of the other. On this day Cosette's glance drove Marius mad, while his glance made Cosette tremble. Marius went away confiding, and Cosette restless. Now they adored each other.

As extreme simplicity trenches on extreme coquetry, she smiled upon him most frankly. She daily awaited impatiently the hour for the walk; she saw Marius, she felt indescribably happy, and sincerely believed that she was expressing her entire thoughts when she said to Jean Valjean, "What a delicious garden the Luxembourg is!" Marius and Cosette were to each other in the night: they did not speak, they did not bow, they did not know each other, but they met; and like the stars in the heavens, which are millions of leagues separate, they lived by looking at each other. It was thus that Cosette gradually became a woman, and was developed into a beautiful and loving woman, conscious of her beauty and ignorant of her love. She was a coquette into the bargain, through her innocence.

All situations have their instincts, and old and eternal mother Nature warned Jean Valjean darkly of the presence of Marius. Jean Valjean trembled in the depths of his mind. He never opened his mouth to Cosette about this stranger. One day, however, he could not refrain, and said, with that vague despair which suddenly thrusts the probe into its own misfortune, "that young man looks like a pedant." Cosette restricted herself to saying, with supreme calmness, "That young man!" as if she looked at him for the first time in her life. "How stupid I am," Jean Valjean thought, "she had not even noticed him, and now I have pointed him out to her."

Marius one day followed Cosette to the Rue de l'Ouest. Another day he spoke to the porter, and the porter spoke in his turn, and said to Jean Valjean, "Do you happen to know, sir, a curious young man who has been making inquiries about you?" The next day Jean Valjean gave Marius that look which Marius at length noticed, and a week later Jean Valjean went away. He made a vow that he would never again set foot in the Rue de l'Ouest or the Luxembourg, and returned to the Rue Plumet. Cosette did not complain, she said nothing, she asked no questions, she did not attempt to discover any motive, for she had reached that stage when a girl fears that her thoughts may be perused, or she may betray herself. Jean Valjean had no experience of these miseries, the only ones which are charming, and the only ones he did not know, and on this account he did not comprehend the grave significance of Cosette's silence. Still he noticed that she

became sad, and he became gloomy. Inexperience was contending on both sides. Once he made an essay, by asking Cosette, "Will you go to the Luxembourg?" A beam illuminated Cosette's pale face; "Yes," she said. They went there, but three months had elapsed, and Marius no longer went there. The next day Jean Valjean again asked Cosette, "Will you go to the Luxembourg?" She answered sadly and gently, "No." Jean Valjean was hurt by the sadness, and heart-broken by the gentleness.

On her side, Cosette was pining; she suffered from Marius's absence, as she had revelled in his presence, singularly, and not exactly knowing why. When Jean Valjean ceased taking her for her usual walk, a feminine instinct whispered to her heart that she must not appear to be attached to the Luxembourg, and that if she displayed indifference in the matter her father would take her back to it. On the day when they returned to the Luxembourg, Marius was no longer there. He had disappeared then, it was all over, She felt the contraction of the heart which nothing dilated, and which daily increased. Still she did not allow Jean Valjean to see anything but her pallor, and her face was ever gentle to him.

These two beings, who had loved each other so exclusively, and one of them with such a touching love, and had lived for a long time one through the other, were now suffering side by side, one on account of the other, without confessing it, without anger, and with a smile.

Jean Valjean had, as we know, a liking to go to but little frequented places, to solitary nooks and forgotten spots. There were at that time, in the vicinity of the gates of Paris, poor fields, almost forming part of the city, where sickly wheat grew in summer, and which in autumn, after the harvest was gone in, did not look as if they had been reaped, but skinned. Jean Valjean had a predilection for these fields, and Cosette did not feel wearied there; it was solitude for him and liberty for her. There she became a little girl again, she ran about and almost played, she took off her bonnet, laid it on Jean Valjean's knees, and plucked flowers. She watched the butterflies, but did not catch them, for humanity and tenderness spring up with love, and the maiden who has in her heart a trembling and fragile idea feels pity for the but-

terfly's wing. She twined poppies into wreaths, which she placed on her head, and when the sun poured its beams upon them and rendered them almost purple, they formed a fiery crown for her fresh pink face.

Even after their life had grown saddened they kept up a habit of early walks. One October morning, tempted by the perfect serenity of the autumn of 1831, they went out, and found themselves just before daybreak near the Barrière du Maine. It was not quite morning yet, but it was dawn, a ravishing and wild minute. There were a few stars in the pale azure sky, the earth was all black, the heavens all white, a shiver ran along the grass, and all around displayed the mysterious influence of twilight. A lark, which seemed mingled with the stars, was singing at a prodigious height, and it seemed as if this hymn of littleness to infinitude calmed the immensity. In the east the dark mass of Val de Grace stood out against the bright steel blue horizon, and glittering Venus rose behind the dome and looked like a soul escaping from a gloomy edifice. All was peace and silence, there was no one in the highway, and a few workmen, going to their daily toil, could be indistinctly seen in the distance.

Jean Valjean was seated on some planks deposited at the gate of a timber-yard, his face was turned to the road, and his back to the light; he forgot all about the sunrise, for he had fallen into one of those profound reveries in which the mind is concentrated, which imprison even the glance and are equivalent to four walls. Jean Valjean was thinking of Cosette, of the possible happiness if nothing came betwixt him and her, of that light with which she filled his life, and which was the breath of his soul. He was almost happy in this reverie, and Cosette, standing by his side, was watching the clouds turn pink. All at once Cosette exclaimed, "Father, there is something coming down here!" Jean Valjean raised his eyes: Cosette was correct.

Seven vehicles were moving in file along the road, and the first six had a singular shape; they resembled brewers' drays, and consisted of long ladders laid upon two wheels, and forming a shaft at the front end. Each dray, or, to speak more correctly, each ladder, was drawn by a team of four horses, and strange clusters of men were dragged along upon these ladders. In the faint light these men could not be seen so

much as divined. Twenty-four on each ladder, twelve on either side, leaning against each other, had their faces turned to the passers-by, and their legs hanging down; and they had behind their back something which rang, and was a chain, and something that glistened, which was a collar. Each man had his collar, but the chain was for all, so that these twenty-four men, if obliged to get down from the dray and walk, were seized by a species of inexorable unity, and were obliged to wind on the ground with the chain as backbone, very nearly like centipedes. At the front and back of each car were two men armed with guns, who stood with their feet on the end of the chain. The seventh vehicle, a vast fourgon, with rack side, but no hood, had four wheels and six horses, and carried a resounding mass of coppers, boilers, chafing-dishes, and chains, among which were mingled a few bound men lying their full length, who seemed to be ill. This fourgon, which was quite open, was lined with broken-down hurdles, which seemed to have been used for old punishments.

The men piled up on the drays allowed themselves to be jolted in silence, and were livid with the morning chill. They all wore canvas trousers, and their naked feet were thrust into wooden shoes, but the rest of their attire was left to the fancy of wretchedness. Their accoutrements were hideously disaccordant, for nothing is more mournful than the harlequin garb of rags. There were crushed hats, oilskin caps, frightful woollen night-caps, and, side by side with the blouse, an out-at-elbow black coat. Some wore women's bonnets, and others had baskets, as head-gear; hairy chests were visible, and through the rents of the clothes tattooing could be distinguished—temples of love, burning hearts and cupids,—but ringworm and other unhealthy red spots might also be noticed. Two or three had passed a straw rope through the side rail of the dray, which hung down like a stirrup and supported their feet, while one of them held in his hand and raised to his mouth something like a black stone which he seemed to be gnawing; it was bread he was eating. All the eyes were dry, and either dull, or luminous with a wicked light. The escort cursed, but the chained men did not breathe a syllable; from time to time the sound of a blow dealt with a stick on shoulder-blades or heads could be heard: some of these men yawned; the rags were terrible; their feet hung down,

their shoulders oscillated, their heads struck against each other, their irons rattled, their eye-balls flashed ferociously, their fists clenched, or opened inertly like the hands of death, and in the rear of the chain a band of children burst into a laugh.

This file of vehicles whatever their nature might be, was lugubrious. It was plain that within an hour a shower might fall, that it might be followed by another, and then another; that the ragged clothing would be drenched and that, once wet through, these men would not dry again, and once chilled, would never grow warm any more; that their canvas trousers would be glued to their bones by the rain, that water would fill their wooden shoes, that lashes could not prevent the chattering of teeth, that the chain would continue to hold them by the neck, and their feet would continue to hang; and it was impossible not to shudder on seeing these human creatures thus bound and passive beneath the cold autumnal clouds, and surrendered to the rain, the breezes, and all the furies of the atmosphere, like trees and stones. The blows were not even spared the sick who lay bound with ropes and motionless in the seventh vehicle, and who seemed to have been thrown down there like sacks filled with wretchedness.

All at once the sun appeared, and it seemed as if it set fire to all these ferocious heads. Tongues became untied, and a storm of furies, oaths, and songs exploded. The wide horizontal light cut the whole file in two, illumining the heads and bodies, and leaving the feet and wheels in obscurity. Thoughts appeared on faces, and it was a fearful thing to see demons with their masks thrown away, and ferocious souls laid bare. Some of the merrier ones had in their mouths quills, through which they blew vermin on the crowd, selecting women: the dawn caused their lamentable faces to stand out in the darkness of the shadows. Not one of these beings but was misshapen through wretchedness, and it was so monstrous that it seemed to change the light of the sun into the gleam of a lightning flash. The first cart-load had struck up, and were now loudly singing, with a haggard joviality, a pot-pourri of Desaugiers, at that time famous, under the title of *la Vestale;* the trees shook mournfully, while in the side-walks bourgeois faces were listening with an idiotic beautitude to these comic songs chanted by spectres.

Jean Valjean's eye had become frightful; it was no longer

an eyeball, but that profound glass bulb which takes the place of the eye in some unfortunate men, which seems unconscious of reality, and in which the reflection of horrors and catastrophes flashes. He remained petrified and stupid, asking himself through a confused and inexpressible agony what was the meaning of this sepulchral persecution, and whence came this Pandemonium that pursued him. All at once he raised his hands to his forehead, the usual gesture of those to whom memory suddenly returns; he remembered that this was really the itinerary, that this detour was usual to avoid any meeting with royalty, which was always possible on the Fontainebleau road, and that five-and-thirty years before he had passed through that barriére. Cosette was not the less horrified, though in a different way; she did not understand, her breath failed her, and what she saw did not appear to her possible; at length she exclaimed,—

"Father! what is there in those vehicles?"

Jean Valjean answered,—

"Convicts."

"Where are they going?"

"To the galleys."

It was, in fact, the Chain, which leaving Bicétre before daybreak, was taking the Mans road, to avoid Fontainebleau, where the king then was. This détour made the fearful journey last three or four days longer; but it surely may be prolonged to save a royal personage the sight of a punishment! Jean Valjean went home crushed, for such encounters are blows, and the recollections they leave behind resemble concussion. While walking along the Rue de Babylone Jean Valjean did not notice that Cosette asked him other questions about what they had just seen; perhaps he was himself too absorbed in his despondency to notice her remarks and answer them. At night, however, when Cosette left him to go to bed, he heard her say in a low voice, and as if speaking to herself, "I feel that if I were to meet one of those men in the street I should die only from being so close to him."

Luckily, the next day after this tragic interlude there were festivals in Paris on account of some official solemnity. Jean Valjean, breaking through his habits, took Cosette to these rejoicings, in order to make her forget the scene of the previous day, and efface, beneath the laughing tumult of all

Paris, the abominable thing which had passed before her. The review which seasoned the fête, rendered uniforms very natural; hence Jean Valjean put on his National Guard coat, with the vague inner feeling of a man who is seeking a refuge, However, the object of this jaunt seemed to be attained. Cosette, who made it a law to please her father, and to whom any festival was a novelty, accepted the distraction with the easy and right good-will of adolescents, and did not make too disdainful a pout at the porringer of joy which is called a public holiday. Hence Jean Valjean might believe that he had succeeded, and that no trace of the hideous vision remained. A few days after, one morning when the sun was shining, and both were on the garden steps—another infraction of the rules which Jean Valjean seemed to have imposed on himself, and that habit of remaining in her chamber which sadness had caused Cosette to assume—the girl, wearing a combing jacket, was standing in that morning negligé which adorably envelopes maidens, and looks like a cloud over a star, and with her head in the light, her cheeks pink from a good night's rest, and gazed at softly by the old man, she was plucking the petals of a daisy. She did not know the delicious legend of "I love you, a little, passionately," etc., for who could have taught it to her? She handled the flower instinctively and innocently, without suspecting that plucking a daisy to pieces is questioning a heart. Jean Valjean was fascinated by the contemplation of these little fingers on this flower, forgetting everything in the radiance which surrounded the child. She seemed to be thinking of something, but that something must be charming. All at once she turned her head on her shoulder, with the delicate slowness of a swan, and said to Jean Valjean, "Tell me, father, what the galleys are."

Their life thus gradually became overcast; only one amusement was left them which had formerly been a happiness, and that was to carry bread to those who were starving, and clothes to those who were cold. It was at this period that they paid the visit to Jondrette's den. The day after that visit Jean Valjean appeared at an early hour in the pavilion, calm as usual, but with a large wound in his left arm, that resembled a burn, and which he accounted for in some way or other. This wound kept him at home for a whole

month, for he would not see any medical man. Cosette dressed his wound morning and night with an air of such angelic happiness at being useful to him, that Jean Valjean felt all his fears and anxieties dissipated, and he gazed at Cosette, saying, "Oh, the excellent wound! the good evil!"

Cosette, seeing her father ill, spent nearly the whole day by the side of Jean Valjean, and read to him any books he chose, which were generally travels. Jean Valjean was regenerated: his tranquillity returned with ineffable radiance. His happiness was such that the frightful discovery of the Thénardiers in the Jondrettes, which was so unexpected, had to some extent glided over him. He had succeeded in escaping, his trail was lost, and what did he care for the rest! As for the hideous vision of the Barrière du Maine, Cosette had not spoken again about it. In the convent Sister Ste Mechtilde had taught Cosette music; she had a voice such as a linnet would have if it possessed a soul, and at times she sang melancholy songs in the wounded man's obscure room, which Jean Valjean was delighted with. Spring arrived, and the garden was so delicious at that season of the year, that Jean Valjean said to Cosette, "You never go out, and I wish you to take a stroll." "As you please, father," said Cosette. And, to obey her father, she resumed her walks in the garden, generally alone, for, as we have mentioned, Jean Valjean, who was probably afraid of being seen from the gate, hardly ever entered it.

CHAPTER XVI.

One evening little Gavroche had eaten nothing; he remembered that he had not dined either on the previous day, and that was becoming ridiculous, so he formed the resolution to try and sup. He went prowling about at the deserted spots beyond the Salpêtrière, for there are good windfalls there. He thus reached a suburb which seemed to him to be the village of Austerlitz. In one of his previous strolls he had noticed there an old garden frequented by an old man and an old woman, and in this garden a passable apple-tree. By the side of this tree was a sort of badly-closed fruit-loft, whence an apple might be obtained. Gavroche proceeded to the garden; he found the lane again, he recognized the apple-tree, and examined the hedge; a hedge is but a stride. Day

was declining, Gavroche was preparing to clamber over the hedge, when he stopped short—some people were talking in the garden. Two paces from him at the foot of the hedge, lay a stone, which formed a species of bench, and on this bench the old man of the garden was seated with the old woman standing in front of him. Gavroche listened.

"Monsieur Mabœuf!"

"Well, Mother Plutarch!"

"The landlord is not satisfied. There are three quarters owing. He says that he will turn you out."

"I will go."

"The butcher has stopped our credit, and will not supply any more meat."

"That is lucky, for I cannot digest meat; it is heavy."

"But what shall we have for dinner?"

"Bread."

"The baker insists on receiving something on account; no money, no bread, he says."

"Very good."

"But really, sir, we cannot live in that way without money."

"I have none."

The old woman went away, and left the old gentleman alone. He began thinking, and Gavroche thought too: it was almost night. The first result of Gavroche's reflection was that, instead of climbing over the hedge, he lay down under it. The branches parted a little at the bottom. "Hilloh," said Gavroche to himself, "it's an alcove," and he crept into it. His back was almost against the octogenarian's bench, and he could hear him breathe. Then, in lieu of dining, Gavroche tried to sleep, but it was the sleep of a cat, with one eye open. The whiteness of the twilight sky lit up the ground, and the lane formed a livid line between two rows of dark streets. All at once two figures appeared on this white stripe, one was in front and the other a little distance behind.

The first figure seemed to be some old bowed citizen, who walked slowly, owing to his age, and was strolling about in the starlight. The second was straight, firm, and slim; he regulated his steps by those of the man in front. He held his head up with a sort of robust grace, and under the hat a glimpse could be caught of a pale, youthful profile in the twilight. This profile had a rose in its mouth, and was fami-

liar to Gavroche, for it was Montparnasse. Gavroche at once began observing, for it was evident that one of these men had projects upon the other. Montparnasse hunting at such an hour and such a spot, that was menacing. What should he do? interfere? one weakness helping another! Montparnasse would have laughed at it, for Gavroche did not conceal from himself that the old man first, and then the boy, would be only two mouthfuls for this formidable bandit of eighteen. While Gavroche was deliberating, the attack, a sudden and hideous attack, took place. Montparnasse threw away the rose, leapt upon the old man, grappled him and clung to him, and Gavroche had difficulty in repressing a cry. A moment after one of these men was beneath the other, crushed, gasping. But it was not exactly what Gavroche had anticipated; the man on the ground was Montparnasse, the one at the top the citizen.

"That's a tough invalide," Gavroche thought. And he could not refrain from clapping his hands, but it was not heard by the two combatants. After the struggle there was a silence, and Montparnasse ceased writhing. The worthy man had not uttered a word or given a cry; he rose, and Gavroche heard him say to Montparnasse, "Get up."

Montparnasse did so, but the citizen still held him. Gavroche looked and listened, and was able to catch the following dialogue—the gentleman questioned, and Montparnasse answered:—

"What is your age?"

"Nineteen."

"You are strong and healthy, why do you not work? What is your trade?"

"Idler."

"Speak seriously. Can anything be done for you? what do you wish to be?"

"A robber."

There was a silence, and the old gentleman seemed in profound thought, but he did not lose his hold of Montparnasse. Every now and then the young bandit, who was vigorous and active, shook himself, attempted a trip, wildly writhed his limbs, and tried to escape. The old gentleman did not appear to notice it, and held the ruffian's two arms in one hand with the sovereign indifference of absolute strength. The old man's

reverie lasted some time; then gazing fixedly at Montparnasse, he mildly raised his voice and addressed to him, in the darkness where they stood, a sort of solemn appeal, of which Gavroche did not lose a syllable.

"My boy, you are entering by sloth into the most laborious of existences. Stop while there is yet time, and save yourself, otherwise it is all over with you. Labour is the law, and whoever repulses it as a bore must have it as a punishment. You do not wish to be a labourer, and you will be a slave. Ah, you do not care for the honest fatigue of men, and you are about to know the sweat of the damned; while others sing you will groan. You will see other men working in the distance, and they will seem to you to be resting. The labourer, the reaper, the sailor, the blacksmith, will appear to you in the light like the blessed inmates of a paradise. You want fine black cloth, polished shoes, to scent your head with fragrant oil to please creatures, and be a pretty fellow; you will have your hair close shaven, and wear a red jacket and wooden shoes. You want a ring on your finger, and will wear a collar on your neck, and if you look at a woman you will be beaten. And you will go in there at twenty and come out at fifty years of age. You will go in young, red-cheeked, healthy, with your sparkling eyes, and all your white teeth, and your curly locks, and you will come out again broken, bent, wrinkled, toothless, horrible, and grey-headed! Ah, my poor boy, you are on the wrong road, and indolence is a bad adviser, for robbery is the hardest of labours. Take my advice, and do not undertake the laborious task of being an idler. Now go and think over what I have said to you. By the bye, what did you want of me? my purse? here it is."

And the old man, releasing Montparnasse, placed his purse in his hand, which Montparnasse weighed for a moment; after which, with the same mechanical precaution as if he had stolen it, Montparnasse let it glide gently into the back-pocket of his coat.

"Old humbug!" he muttered. Who was the old gentleman? The reader has doubtless guessed. Montparnasse, in his stupefaction, watched him till he disappeared in the gloom, and this contemplation was fatal for him. While the old gentleman retired Gavroche advanced. He had assured himself by a glance that Father Mabœuf was still seated on his bench

and was probably asleep. Then the gamin left the bushes, and began crawling in the shadow behind the motionless Montparnasse. He thus got up to the young bandit unnoticed, gently insinuated his hand into the back-pocket of the fine black cloth coat, seized the purse, withdrew his hand, and crawled back again into the shadow like a lizard. Montparnasse, who had no reason to be on his guard, perceived nothing, and Gavroche, when he had returned to the spot where Father Mabœuf was sitting, threw the purse over the hedge and ran off at full speed. The purse fell on Father Mabœuf's foot and awoke him. He stooped down and picked up the purse, which he opened, without comprehending anything. It was a purse with two compartments; in one was some change, in the other were six Napoleons. M. Mabœuf, greatly startled, carried the thing to his housekeeper.

"It has fallen from heaven," said Mother Plutarch.

This adventure saddened Jean Valjean for a time, even though Cosette's sorrow had now attained the convalescent stage. Nature, spring, youth, love for her father, the gaiety of the flowers and birds, filtered gradually day by day, and drop by drop, something that almost resembled oblivion into her virginal and young soul. Was the fire entirely extinguished? or were layers of ashes merely formed? The fact is, that she hardly felt at all the painful and burning point, and one day when she suddenly thought of Marius; "Why," she said, "I had almost forgotten him." The same week she noticed while passing the garden gate, a very handsome officer in the lancers, with a wasp-like waist, a delightful uniform, the cheeks of a girl, a sabre under his arm, waxed moustaches, and lacquered schapska. In other respects, he had light hair, blue eyes flush with his head, a round, vain insolent, and pretty face; he was exactly the contrary of Marius. He had a cigar in his mouth, and Cosette supposed that he belonged to the regiment quartered in the barracks of the Rue de Babylone. The next day she saw him pass again, and remarked the hour. From this moment—was it an accident?—she saw Theodule—for it was he—pass nearly every day.

It was at this identical time that Marius was slowly descending to the abyss, and said, "If I could only see her again before I die!" If his wish had been realized, if he had at that

moment seen Cosette looking at a lancer, he would have been unable to utter a word, but expired of grief. Marius possessed one of those temperaments which bury themselves in chagrin, and abide in it. Cosette was one of those who plunge into it, and again emerge. Cosette, however, was passing through that dangerous moment, the fatal phase of feminine reverie left to itself, in which the heart of an isolated maiden resembles those vine tendrils which cling, according to chance, to the capital of a marble column or to the sign-post of an inn.

What was there in Cosette's soul? The image of the handsome officer was reflected on the surface, but was there any reminiscence at the bottom, quite at the bottom? Perhaps so, but Cosette did not know.

A singular incident occurred.

In the first fortnight of April Jean Valjean went on a journey: this, as we know, occurred from time to time at very lengthened intervals. Where did he go? No one knew, not even Cosette. It was generally when money ran short in the house that Jean Valjean took these trips. Jean Valjean then, was absent, and he had said, "I shall be back in three days." At night Cosette was alone in the drawing-room, and in order to wile away the time, she opened her piano and began singing to her own accompaniment the song of Euryanthe, "Hunters wandering in the wood," which is probably the finest thing we possess in the shape of music. When she had finished she remained passive, till she suddenly fancied she heard some one walking in the garden. Cosette was near the drawing-room shutters, which were closed, and put her ear to them; and it seemed to her that it was the footfall of a man who was walking very gently. She hurried up to her room on the first-floor, opened a Venetian frame in her shutter, and looked out into the garden. The moon was shining bright as day, and there was nobody in it.

Cosette fancied that she was mistaken, and thought no more of it. Moreover, she was not naturally very timid. As we may remember, she was rather a lark than a dove, and she had a stern and brave temper.

The next evening, at nightfall, she was walking about the garden. In the midst of the confused thoughts which occupied her mind, she fancied that she could distinguish now and then a noise like that of the previous night, as if some one were

walking in the gloom under the trees not far from her. She left the "thicket," and had a small grass-plat to cross ere she reached the house. The moon, which had just risen behind her, projected Cosette's shadow upon the grass in front of her, and she stopped in terror. By the side of her shadow the moon distinctly traced on the grass another singularly startling and terrible shadow—a shadow with a hat on its head. For a moment she was unable to speak or cry, but at last she collected all her courage and boldly turned round. There was nobody. She went back into the shrubs, bravely searched in every corner, and discovered nothing.

The next day Jean Valjean returned, and Cosette told him what she fancied she had seen and heard.

"Perhaps it is nothing," he said; but he left her with some excuse, and went into the garden, where she saw him examine the railings with considerable attention. He also passed that and the two following nights in the garden, and Cosette saw him through the hole in her shutter. On the third night the moon was beginning to rise later, and it might be about one in the morning when she heard a hearty burst of laughter, and her father's voice calling her,—

"Cosette!"

She leapt out of bed, put on her dressing gown, and opened her window; her father was standing on the grass-plat below.

"I have woke you up to reassure you," he said; "look at this,—here's your shadow in the round hat."

And he showed her on the grass a shadow which the moon designed, and which really looked rather like the spectre of a man wearing a round hat. It was an outline produced by a zinc chimney-pot with a cowl, which rose above an adjoining roof. Cosette also began laughing, all her mournful suppositions fell away, and the next morning at breakfast she jested at the ill-omened garden, haunted by the ghost of chimney-pots.

She did not cross-question herself, as to the singularity of a chimney-pot which is afraid of being caught in the act, and retires when its shadow is looked at, for the shadow did retire when Cosette turned round, and she fancied herself quite certain of that fact. A few days after, however, a fresh incident occurred.

In the garden, near the railings looking out on the street, there was a stone bench, protected from the gaze of passers-by

by a hedge. One evening in this same month of April, Jean Valjean had gone out, and Cosette, after sunset, was seated on this bench. Cosette was reflecting; an objectless sorrow was gradually gaining on her, which comes perhaps—for who knows?—from the mystery of the tomb which is yawning at the moment. Possibly Fantine was in that shadow.

Cosette rose, and slowly went round the garden walking on the dew-laden grass. She returned to the bench, but at the moment when she was going to sit down, she noticed at the place she had left a rather large stone, which had evidently not been there a moment before; all at once the idea that the stone had not reached the bench of itself, that some one had placed it there, and that an arm had been passed through the grating, occurred to her and frightened her. No doubt was possible; she did not touch it, but fled without daring to look behind her. On entering she asked Toussaint,—

"Has my father come in?"

"No, Miss."

Jean Valjean, a thoughtful man, and stroller by night, often did not return till a late hour.

"Toussaint," Cosette continued, "be careful to put up the bars to the shutters looking on the garden, and to place the little iron things in the rings that close them."

Toussaint did not fail, and Cosette was well aware of the fact, but she could not refrain from adding,—

"For it is so desolate here."

"Well, that's true," said Toussaint; "we might be murdured before we had time to say, Ouf! and then too, master does not sleep in the house. But don't be frightened, Miss. I fastened up the windows like Bastilles. Lone women! I should think that is enough to make a body shudder. Only think! to see men coming into your bed-room and hear them say, 'Hold your tongue!' and then they begin to cut your throat. It is not so much the dying, for everybody dies, and we know that we must do so, but it is the abomination of feeling those fellows touch you; and then their knives are not sharp, perhaps; oh, Lord!"

"Hold your tongue," said Cosette, "and fasten up everything securely."

Cosette, terrified by the drama improvised by Toussaint, and perhaps too by the apparitions of the last week, which re-

turned to her mind, did not even dare to say to her, "Just go and look at the stone laid on the bench," for fear of having to open the garden gate again, and the men might walk in. She had all the doors and windows carefully closed, made Toussaint examine the whole house from cellar to attic, locked herself in her bed-room, looked under the bed, and slept badly. The whole night through she saw the stone as large as a mountain and full of caverns. At sunrise she dressed herself, went down into the garden, and raised the stone, which was of some size, and there was something under it that resembled a letter; it was as an envelope of white paper. Cosette seized it; there was no address on it, and it was not sealed up. Cosette took out a small quire of paper, each page of which was numbered, and bore several lines written in a very nice and delicate hand, so Cosette thought. She looked for a name, but there was none; for a signature, but there was none either. For whom was the packet intended? Probably for herself, as a hand had laid it on the bench. From whom did it come? An irresistible fascination seized upon her; she tried to turn her eyes away from these pages which trembled in her hand. She looked at the sky, the street, the acacias all bathed in light, the pigeons circling round an adjoining roof, and then her eye settled on the manuscript, and she said to herself, that she must know what was inside it. This is what she read:—

The reduction of the Universe to a single being, the dilatation of a single being as far as GOD, such is love.

Love is the salutation of the angels to the stars.

How sad the soul is when it is sad through love! what a void is the absence of the being, who of her own self fills the world! Oh! how true it is that the beloved being becomes GOD! We might understand how GOD might be jealous of her, had not the Father of all evidently made creation for the soul, and the soul for love.

Separated lovers cheat absence by a thousand chimerical things, which, however, have their reality. They are prevented seeing each other, and they cannot write, but they find a number of mysterious ways to correspond. They send to each other the song of birds, the light of the sun, the sighs of the breeze, the rays of the stars, and the whole of creation:

and why should they not? All the works of GOD are made to serve love. Love is sufficiently powerful to interest all nature with its messages.

Love is a portion of the soul itself, and is of the same nature as it. Like it, it is the divine spark, like it, it is incorruptible indivisible, and imperishable. It is a point of fire within us, which is immortal and infinite, which nothing can limit, and nothing extinguish; we feel it burning even in the marrow of our bones, and see its flashing in the depths of the heavens.

GOD can add nothing to the happiness of those who love, except giving them endless duration. After a life of love, an eternity of love is in truth an augmentation; but it is impossible even for GOD to increase in its intensity the ineffable felicity which love gives to the soul in this world. GOD is the fulness of heaven, love is the fulness of man.

When love has blended and moulded two beings in an angelic and sacred union, they have found the secret of life; henceforth they are only the two terms of the same destiny, the two wings of one mind. Love and soar!

True love is in despair, or enchanted by a lost glove or a found handkerchief, and it requires eternity for its devotion and its hopes. It is composed at once of the infinitely great and the infinitely little.

What a grand thing it is to be loved! what a grander thing still to love! The heart becomes heroic by the might of passion. Henceforth it is composed of nought but what is pure, and is only supported by what is elevated and great. An unworthy thought can no more germinate in it than a nettle on a glacier. The lofty and serene soul, inaccessible to emotions and vulgar passions, soaring above the clouds and shadows of the world, follies, falsehoods, hatreds, vanities, and miseries, dwells in the azure of the sky, and henceforth only feels the profound and subterranean heavings of destiny as the summit of the mountains feels earthquakes.

While reading these lines Cosette gradually fell into a reverie, and at the moment when she raised her eyes from the

last page the pretty officer passed triumphantly in front of the gate for it was his hour. Cosette found him hideous. She began gazing at the roll of paper again ; it was in an exquisite hand-writing, Cosette thought, all written by the same hand, but with different inks, some very black, others pale as when ink is put in the stand, and consequently on different days. It was, therefore, a thought expanded on the paper, sigh by sigh, irregularly, without order, without choice, without purpose.

From whom could these pages come ? Who could have written them ? Cosette did not hesitate for a moment,—only from one man, from *him !* Daylight had returned to her mind, and everything reappeared. She experienced an extraordinary joy and a profound agony. It was he ! he who wrote to her ! he had been there ! his arm had been passed through the railings ! while she was forgetting him he had found her again ! But had she forgotten him ? No, never ! she was mad to have thought so for a moment, for she had ever loved, ever adored him.

As she finished reading it for the third time Lieutenant Theodule returned past the railings, and clanked his spurs on the pavement. Cosette was obliged to raise her eyes, and she found him insipid, silly, stupid, useless, fatuous, displeasing, impertinent, and very ugly. The officer thought himself bound to smile, and she turned away ashamed and indignant ; she would gladly have thrown something at his head. She ran away, re-entered the house, and locked herself in her bed-room, to re-read the letter, learn it by heart, and dream. When she had read it thoroughly she kissed it and hid it in her bosom. It was all over. Cosette had fallen back into the profound seraphic love, the Paradisaic abyss had opened again.

When night came Jean Valjean went out, and Cosette dressed herself. She arranged her hair in the way that best became her, and put on a dress whose body, being cut a little too low, displayed the whole of the neck, and was therefore, as girls say "rather indecent." It was not the least in the world indecent, but it was prettier than the former fashion. She dressed herself in this way without knowing why Was she going out ? No. Did she expect a visitor ? No. She went down into the garden as it grew dark ; she began walking under the branches, removing them from time to time with her hand, as some were very low, and thus reached the

bench. The stone was still there, and she sat down and laid her beautiful white hand on the stone, as if to caress and thank it. All at once she had that indescribable feeling which people experience even without seeing, when some one is standing behind them. She turned her head and rose—it was he. He was bare-headed, and seemed pale and thin, and his black clothes could be scarce distinguished. His face was lit up by the flush of departing day, and by the thoughts of an expiring soul. Cosette though ready to faint, did not utter a cry; she slowly recoiled, as she felt herself attracted, but he did not stir. Through the ineffable sadness that enveloped him she felt the glance of the eyes which she could not see. Cosette, in recoiling, came to a tree, and leaned against it; had it not been for this tree she would have fallen. Then she heard his voice, that voice which she had really never heard before, scarce louder than the rustling of the foliage, as he murmured,—

"Pardon me for being here; my heart is swollen, I could not live as I was, and I have come. Have you read what I placed on the bench? do you recognize me at all? do not be frightened at me. Do you remember that day when you looked at me, now so long ago? It was in the Luxembourg garden, near the Gladiator, and the days on which you passed before me were June 16 and July 2, it is nearly a year ago. I have not seen you again for a very long time. I fancied that I saw you pass once as I was reading the papers under the Odéon Arcade, and ran after you, but no, it was a person wearing a bonnet like yours. At night I come here—fear nothing, no one sees me—and I walk very softly that you may not hear me, for you might be alarmed. The other evening I was behind you, you turned round, and I fled. You see you are my angel, so let me come now and then, and I believe that I am going to die. If you only knew how I adore you! But forgive me, I am speaking to you, I know not what I am saying, perhaps I offend you—do I offend you?"—

"Oh, my mother!" she said.

And she sank down as if she were dying. He seized her in his arms, and pressed her to his heart, not knowing what he did. He supported her while himself tottering. He felt as if his head were full of smoke; flashes passed between his eyelashes; his ideas left him, and it seemed to him as if he were accomplishing a religious act, and yet committing a profana-

tion. She took his hand, and laid it on her heart; he felt the paper there and stammered,—

"You love me then?"

She answered in so low a voice, that it was almost an inaudible breath,—

"Silence! you know I do."

And she hid her blushing face in the chest of the proud and intoxicated young man. He fell on the bench, and she by his side. They no longer found words, and the stars were beginning to twinkle. How came it that their lips met? How comes it that the birds sing, the snow melts, the rose opens, May bursts into life, and the dawn grows white behind the black tree on the rustling tops of the hills? One kiss, and that was all; both trembled and gazed at each other in the darkness with flashing eyes. They neither felt the fresh night nor cold stone, nor the damp grass nor the moist soil,—they looked at each other, and their hearts were full of thoughts. Their hands were clasped without their cognizance. At intervals Cosette stammered a word; her soul trembled on her lips like the dew-drop on a flower.

Gradually they conversed, and expansiveness succeeded the silence which is plenitude. They told each other, with a candid faith in their illusions all that love, youth, and the remnant of childhood which they still had, brought to their minds; their two hearts were poured into each other, so that at the end of an hour the young man had the maiden's soul and the maiden his. They were mutually penetrated, enchanted, and dazzled. When they had finished, when they had told each other everything, she laid her head on his shouder and asked him,—

"What is your name?"

"Marius," he said: "and yours?"

"Mine is Cosette."

CHAPTER XVII

Since 1823, while the public-house at Montfermeil was sinking, and gradually being swallowed up, not in the abyss of a bankruptcy, but in the sewer of small debts, the Thénardiers had had two more children both male. These made five, two daughters and three boys, and they were a good many. The mother had got rid of the latter while still babies by a singular

piece of good luck. Got rid of, that is exactly the term, for in this woman there was only a fragment of nature; it is a phenomenon, however, of which there is more than one instance. Like the Maréchale de Lamothe-Houdancourt, the Thénardier was only a mother as far as her daughters, and her maternity ended there. Her hatred of the human race began with her sons; on that side her cruelty was precipitous, and her heart had a lugubrious escarpment there. She detested the eldest, and execrated the two others. Why? because she did. The most terrible of motives and most indisputable of answers is, Because. "I do not want a pack of squalling brats," this mother said.

Let us now explain how the Thénardiers managed to dispose of their two last children, and even made a profit of them. Our readers remember the woman named Magnon who got an annuity out of old Gillenormand for two children she had. She lived on the Quai des Celestins, at the corner of that ancient Rue du Petit-Musc which has done all it could to change its bad reputation into a good odour. Many will also remember the great croup-epidemic, which, thirty-five years ago, desolated the banks of the Seine. In this epidemic Magnon lost her two boys, still very young, on the same day, one in the morning, the other in the evening. It was a blow, for these children were precious to their mother, as they represented eighty francs a month. When the children were dead the annuity was buried, and so Magnon sought an expedient. She wanted two children, and Madame Thénardier had two of the same size and age. The little Thénardiers became the little Magnons, and Magnon left the Quai des Celestins, and went to live in the Rue Cloche-Percée. Thénardier, however, demanded for this loan of children ten francs a month, which Magnon promised, and even paid. We need not say that M. Gillenormand continued every six months to see the children. He did not notice the change. "Oh, sir," Magnon would say to him, "how like you they are, to be sure."

Thénardier, to whom avatars were an easy task, seized this opportunity to become Jondrette. His two daughters and Gavroche had scarcely had time to perceive that they had two little brothers, for in a certain stage of misery people are affected by a sort of spectral indifference, and regard human beings as ghosts. Your nearest relatives are often to

you no more than vague forms of the shadow, hardly to be distinguished from the nebulous back-ground of life, and which easily become blended again with the invisible. The two little ones who had fallen into Magnon's clutches had no cause to complain; recommended by the eighty francs, they were taken care of, like everything which brings in a profit; they were not badly clothed, not badly fed, treated almost like "little gentlemen," and better off with their false mother than the true one. Magnon acted the lady, and never talked slang in their presence. They spent several years there, and Thénardier augured well of it. One day he happened to say to Magnon as she handed him the monthly ten francs, "The 'father' must give them an education."

All at once these two poor little creatures, hitherto tolerably well protected, even by their evil destiny, were suddenly hurled into life, and forced to begin it. An arrest of criminals *en masse*, like that in the Jondrette garret, being necessarily complicated with researches and ulterior incarcerations, is a veritable disaster for that hideous and occult counter-society which lives beneath public society, and an adventure of this nature produces all sorts of convulsions in the gloomy world. The catastrophe of the Thénardiers was the catastrophe of Magnon. One day, the police made a sudden descent on the Rue Cloche-Percée. Magnon was arrested, as was Mamselle Miss, a Gallicised English thief who resided with her, and all the inhabitants of the house which were suspected were caught in the haul. The two little boys were playing at the same time in the back-yard, and saw nothing of the razzia, but when they tried to go in they found the door locked and the house empty. A cobbler whose stall was opposite called to them and gave them a paper which "their mother" had left for them. On the paper was this address, "M. Barge, receiver of rents, No, 8, Rue du Roi de Sicile," The cobbler said to them,—"You no longer live here. Go there, it is close by, the first street on your left. Ask your way with that paper." The boys set off, the elder leading the younger and holding in his hand the paper which was to serve as their guide. It was cold, and his little numbed fingers held the paper badly, and at the corner of a lane a puff of wind tore it from him, and as it was night the boy could not find it again. They began wandering about the streets hap-hazard.

One evening, when the Spring breezes were blowing sharply, so sharply that January seemed to have returned, and the citizens had put on their cloaks again, little Gavroche, still shivering gaily under his rags, was standing as if in ecstasy in front of a hair-dresser's shop in the vicinity of the Orme-Saint Gervais. He was adorned with a woman's woollen shawl, picked up no one knew where, of which he had made a belcher. Little Gavroche appeared to be lost in admiration of a waxen image of a bride, wearing a very low-necked dress, and a wreath of orange-flowers in her hair, which revolved between two lamps, and lavished its smiles on the passers-by; but in reality he was watching to see whether he could not "bone" a cake of soap, which he would afterwards sell for a half-penny to a barber in the suburbs. He frequently breakfasted on one of these cakes, and he called this style of work, for which he had a talent, "shaving the barber."

While Gavroche was examining the bride, the window, and the Windsor soap, two boys of unequal height, very decently dressed, and younger than himself, one apparently seven, the other five years of age, timidly turned the handle, and entered the shop, asking for something, charity possibly, in a plaintive murmur, which was more like a sob than a prayer. They both spoke together, and their words were unintelligible, because sobs choked the voice of the younger boy, and cold made the teeth of the elder rattle. The barber turned with a furious face, and without laying down his razor drove one into the street with his left hand, the other with his knee, and closed the door again.

The two lads set out again, crying: a cloud had come up in the meanwhile, and it began raining. Little Gavroche ran up to them, and accosted them thus,—

"What's the matter with you, babes?"

"We don't know where to sleep," the elder replied.

"Is that all?" said Gavroche, "that's a great matter to cry about, you babes in the wood." And assuming an accent of tender affection and gentle protection, which was visible through his somewhat pompous superiority, he said,

"Come with me, brats."

"Yes, sir," said the elder boy.

And the two children followed him as they would have done an archbishop, and left off crying. Gavroche led them

along the Rue St Antoine, in the direction of the Bastille, and while going off took an indignant and retrospective glance at the barber's shop.

The two children limped after him, and as they passed one of those thick, close gratings which indicate a baker's, for bread like gold is placed behind a grating, Gavroche turned round.

"By the bye, brats, have you dined?"

"We have had nothing to eat, sir, since early this morning," the elder answered.

"Then you haven't either father or mother?" Gavroche continued magisterially.

"I beg your pardon, sir; we have a pa and a ma, but we don't know where they are."

"And so we have lost our authors. We don't know what we have done with them. That isn't the right thing, brats, and you didn't ought to turn grown-up people out to grass in that way. Well, I suppose I must find them a shake-down. But let's see if we can find anything for supper."

He stopped, and for some minutes searched all sorts of corners which he had in his rags: at length he raised his head with an air which only wished to be satisfied, but was in reality triumphant,—

"Calm yourself, my infants; here is supper for three."

And he drew a sou from one of his pockets; without giving the lads time to feel amazed, he pushed them both before him into the baker's shop, and laid his sou on the counter, exclaiming,—

"Boy, five centimes' worth of bread."

The baker, who was the master in person, took up a loaf and a knife.

"In three pieces, my boy," Gavroche remarked, and he added with dignity,—

"We are three."

When the bread was cut, the baker put the sou into the till, and Gavroche said to the two boys,—

"Grub away."

The boys looked at him in surprise, and Gavroche burst into a laugh.

"Shove that into your musket."

There was one piece smaller than the two others, and he took that for himself. The poor boys, Gavroche included,

were starving; while tearing the bread with their teeth, they blocked up the baker's shop, who, now that he was paid, looked at them angrily.

As they were finishing their bread, they reached the corner of that morose Rue de Ballet at the end of which the low and hostile wicket of la Force is visible.

"Hilloh, is that you, Gavroche?" some one said.

"Hilloh, is that you, Montparnasse?" said Gavroche.

It was a man who accosted Gavroche, no other than Montparnasse disguised with blue spectacles, but Gavroche was able to recognize him.

"My eye!" Gavroche went on, "you have a skin of the colour of a linseed poultice, and blue spectacles like a doctor. That's your style, on the word of an old man!"

"Silence! Do you know where I am going?"

"To the abbey of Go-up-with-regret" (the scaffold) said Gavroche.

"I am going to meet Babet."

"I thought he was buckled up."

"He has unfastened the buckle," Montparnasse replied.

And he hurriedly told the boy that, on that very morning, Babet, while being removed to the Conciergerie, escaped by turning to the left instead of the right in the "police office passage."

Gavroche, while talking, had seized a cane which Montparnasse held in his hand: he mechanically pulled at the upper part, and a dagger blade became visible.

"The deuce!" Gavroche continued, "are you going to have a turn-up with the slops?"

"There's no knowing," Montparnasse answered carelessly, "it's always as well to have a pin about you."

Gavroche pressed him.

"What are you going to do to-night?"

Montparnasse again became serious, and said, mincing his words,—

"Some things, but where are you going now?" Montparnasse asked.

Gavroche pointed to his two protégés, and said,—

"I am going to put these two children to bed."

"Have you a lodging?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Inside the elephant," said Gavroche.

Montparnasse, though naturally not easy to astonish, could not refrain from the exclamation,

"Inside the elephant?

"Yes! There are no draughts as there are under the bridges."

"How do you get in—is there a hole?"

"Of course there is, but you have no need to mention it; it's between the front legs, and the bobbies don't know it."

"And you climb in? I understand."

"One turn, cric crac, it's done, and there's no one to be seen."

After a pause Gavroche added,—

"I shall have a ladder for these young ones."

Montparnasse burst into a laugh.

"Where the devil did you pick up those brats?"

"A barber made me a present of them."

In the meanwhile Montparnasse had become pensive.

"You recognized me very easily," he said.

He took from his pocket two small objects, which were quills wrapped in cotton, and thrust one into each nostril; they made him quite a different nose.

"That changes you," said Gavroche; "you are not so ugly now, and you ought to keep them in for good."

Montparnasse was a handsome fellow, but Gavroche was fond of a joke.

"Well, goodnight," he said; "I am off to my elephant with my brats. Should you happen to want me any night you'll find me there. I lodge in the *entresol*, and there's no porter; ask for Monsieur Gavroche."

Twenty years back there might have been seen in the south-eastern corner of the square of the Bastille, near the canal dock, dug in the old moat of the citadel-prison, a quaint monument, which has already been effaced from the memory of Parisians, and which should have left some trace, as it was an idea of the "Member of the Institute, Commander-in-chief of the army of Egypt." It was an elephant, forty feet high, constructed of carpentry and masonry, bearing on its back a castle which resembled a house, once painted green by some plasterer, and now painted black by the heavens, the rain,

and time. In this deserted and uncovered corner of the square the wide forehead of the colossus, its trunk, its tusks, its castle, its enormous back, and its four feet like columns, produced at night upon the starlit sky a surprising and terrible outline. It was unclean, despised, repulsive, and superb; ugly in the eyes of cits, but melancholy in the eyes of the thinker. It had something about it of the ordure which is swept away, and something of the majesty which is decapitated.

On coming near the colossus Gavroche understood the effect which the infinitely great may produce on the infinitely little, and said,—

"Don't be frightened, brats."

Then he went through a hole in the palings into the ground round the elephant, and helped the children to pass through the breach. The lads, a little frightened, followed Gavroche without a word, and confided in this little Providence in rags who had given them bread and promised them a bed. A ladder, employed by workmen at the column by day, was lying along the palings; Gavroche raised it with singular vigour, and placed it against one of the elephant's fore legs. At the point where the ladder ended a sort of black hole could be distinguished in the belly of the colossus. Gavroche pointed out the ladder and the hole to his guests, and said, "Go up, and go in." The two little boys looked at each other in terror.

"You are frightened, brats!" Gavroche exclaimed, and added, "you shall see."

He clung round the elephant's wrinkled foot, and in a twinkling, without deigning to employ the ladder, he reached the hole. He went in like a lizard gliding into a crevice, and a moment after the boys saw his head, like a white, livid form on the edge of the hole, which was full of darkness.

"Well," he cried, "come up my blessed babes. You will see how snug it is. Come up, you," he said to the elder. "I will hold your hand."

The little boys nudged each other, for the gamin at once frightened and reassured them, and then it was raining very hard. The elder boy ventured, and the younger, on seeing his brother ascending and himself left alone between the feet of this great beast, felt greatly inclined to cry, but did not dare. The elder climbed up the rungs of the ladder in a very totter-

ing way, and as he did so Gavroche encouraged him by exclamations of a fencing-master to his pupils, or of a muleteer to his mules.

"Don't be frightened—that is it—keep on moving—set your foot there—now, your hand here—bravo!"

And when he was within reach he quickly and powerfully seized him by the arm and drew him to him.

"Swallowed!" he said.

The boy had passed through the crevice.

"Now," said Gavroche, "wait for me. Pray sit down, sir."

And, leaving the hole in the same way as he had entered it, he slid down the elephant's leg with the agility of a squirrel, fell on his feet in the grass, seized the youngest boy round the waist and planted him on the middle of the ladder; then he began ascending behind him, shouting to the elder boy.

"I'll push him, and you'll pull him."

In a second the little fellow was pushed up, dragged, pulled, and drawn through the hole before he knew where he was, and Gavroche, entering after him, kicked away the ladder, which fell in the grass, and clapped his hands as he shouted, "There we are! long live General Lafayette!" This explosion over, he added, "Brats, you are in my house."

The hole by which Gavroche entered was a breach scarce visible from the outside, as it was concealed, as we said, under the elephant's belly, and so narrow that only cats and boys could pass through it.

On entering he plunged again into the darkness, and the children heard the phizzing of a match dipped into a bottle of phosphorus, for lucifer matches did not yet exist. A sudden light made them wink. Gavroche had lit one of those rope's-ends dipped in pitch which are called "cellar rats:" and this thing, which smoked more than it illumined, rendered the inside of the elephant indistinctly visible. Gavroche's two guests looked around them, and had much such a feeling as one would experience if shut up in the biblical belly of the whale. An entire gigantic skeleton was visible to them and enveloped them; above their heads a large brown beam, from which sprang at regular distances massive cross bars, represented the spine with the ribs; stalactites of plaster hung down like viscera, and vast spider webs formed from one side to the

other dusty diaphragms. Here and there in corners could be seen large black spots which seemed alive, and changed places rapidly, with a quick and startled movement. The pieces which had fallen from the elephant's back on its belly had filled up the concavity, so that it was possible to walk on it as on a flooring.

Gavroche's bed was perfect, that is to say, there was a mattress, a coverlet, and an alcove with curtains. The mattress was a straw mat, and the coverlet was a rather wide wrapper of coarse, grey wool, very warm, and nearly new. This is what the alcove was,—three long props were driven securely into the plaster soil, that is to say, the elephant's belly, two in front and one behind, and were fastened by a cord at the top, so as to form a hollow pyramid. These props supported a grating of brass wire, simply laid upon them, but artistically fastened with iron wire, so that it entirely surrounded the three poles. A row of large stones fastened the lattice-work down to the ground, so that nothing could pass, and this lattice was merely a piece of the brass work put up in aviaries in menageries. Gavroche's bed was under the wire-work as in a cage, and the whole resembled an Esquimaux's tent. Gavroche moved a few of the stones that held down the lattice-work in front, and shouted to the lads,—

"Now then, on all fours."

He made his guests enter the cage cautiously, then went in after them, brought the stones together again, and hermetically closed the opening. They lay down all three on the mat, and though they were all so short, not one of them could stand upright in the alcove. Gavroche still held the "cellar rat" in his hand.

"What is that, sir?" the elder of the lads asked Gavroche, pointing to the brass grating.

"That," said Gavroche gravely, "is on account of the rats. Go to roost!"

While speaking he wrapped up the little boy in the blanket who murmured,—

"Oh, that is nice, it's so warm!"

Gavroche took a glance of satisfaction at the coverlet.

"That and the brass grating come from the Jardin des Plantes," he said, "I nobbled them from the monkeys."

The two lads gazed with a timid and stupefied respect at

this intrepid and inventive being, a vagabond like them, isolated like them, weak like them, who had something admirable about him, who appeared to them supernatural, and whose face was composed of all the grimaces of an old mountebank, mingled with the simplest and most charming smile.

The two lads crept close together; Gavroche made them all right on the mat, and pulled the blanket up to their ears; then he repeated for a second time in the hieratic language, "Roost."

And he blew out the rope's end. The light was scarce extinguished ere a singular trembling began to shake the trellicework under which the three children were lying. It was a multitude of dull rubbings which produced a metallic sound, as if claws and teeth were assailing the copper wire, and this was accompanied by all sorts of little shrill cries. The little boy of five years of age, hearing this noise above his head, and chilled with terror, nudged his elder brother, but he was "roosting" already, as Gavroche had ordered him; then the little one, unable to hold out any longer for fright, dared to address Gavroche, but in a very low voice and holding his breath.

"What is that?"

"It's the rats," Gavroche answered.

And he laid his head again on the mat. The rats, which were really by thousands in the elephant's carcase, and were the live black spots to which we have alluded, had been held in check by the flame of the link so long as it was alight, but so soon as this cavern, which was, so to speak, their city, had been restored to night, sniffing what that famous story-teller, Perrault, calls "fresh meat," they rushed in bands to Gavroche's tent, climbed to the top, and were biting the meshes, as if trying to enter this novel sort of trap.

"Don't be frightened, they can't get in. And, then, I am here. Stay, take my hand, hold your tongue and sleep."

Gavroche at the same time took the boy's hand across his brother, and the child pressed the hand against his body and felt reassured, for courage and strength have mysterious communications. Silence had set in again around them, the sound of voices had startled and driven away the rats, and when they returned a few minutes later and furiously attacked, the three boys, plunged in sleep, heard nothing more. The night

hours passed away; darkness covered the immense Bastille Square.

Towards the end of the hour which immediately precedes daybreak, a man came running out of the Rue St. Antoine crossed the square, went round the great enclosure of the column of July, and slipped through the palings under the elephant's belly. On getting under the elephant he twice uttered a peculiar cry, which belongs to no human language, and which a parrot alone could reproduce. At the second cry a clear, gay, and young voice answered from the elephant's belly, "Yes!" Almost immediately the plank that closed the hole was removed, and left a passage for a lad, who slid down the elephant's leg and fell at the man's feet. It was Gavroche, and the man was Montparnasse.

"We want you, come and give us a help," said the latter.

The gamin asked for no other explanation.

"Here I am," he said.

And the pair proceeded toward the Rue St. Antoine, whence Montparnasse had come.

CHAPTER XVIII

This is what occurred on this same night at la Force. An escape had been concerted between Babet, Brujon, Gueulemer and Thénardier, although Thénardier was in secret confinement. Babet had managed the affair on his own account during the day, as Montparnasse had told Gavroche, and Montparnasse was to help them outside. Brujon, another bandit, while spending a month in a punishment room, had time to make a rope, and to ripen a plan. Formerly, these severe places, in which prison discipline leaves the prisoner to himself, were composed of four stone walls, a stone ceiling, a brick pavement, a camp-bed, a grated sky-light, and a gate lined with iron, and were called dungeons; but the dungeon was considered too horrible, so now it is composed of an iron gate, a grated sky-light, a camp-bed, a brick pavement, a stone ceiling, four stone walls, and it is called a "punishment room." A little day-light is visible about mid-day. The inconvenience of these rooms, which, as we see, are not dungeons, is to leave beings to think who ought to be set to work. Brujon, therefore, reflected, and he left the punishment room with a cord.

As he was considered very dangerous in the Charlemagne yard, he was placed in the New Building, and the first thing he found there was Gueulemer, the second a nail; Gueulemer, that is to say, crime; and a nail, that is to say, liberty.

Brujon, of whom it is necessary to form a complete idea, was, with the appearance of a delicate complexion and a deeply premeditated languor, a polished, intelligent robber, who possessed a caressing look and an atrocious smile. His look was the result of his will, and his smile the result of his nature. His first studies in his art were directed to roofs, and he had given a great impulse to the trade of lead-stealers, who strip roofs and carry away gutters by the process called *au gras double*. What finally rendered the moment favourable for an attempted escape was that workmen were at this very moment engaged in re-laying and re-tipping the prison slates. The Saint Bernard was not absolutely isolated from the Charlemagne and St. Louis yards, for there were on the roof scaffolding and ladders, in other words, bridges and staircases, on the side of deliverance. The New Building, which was the most cracked and decrepit affair possible to imagine, was the weak point of the building. Saltpetre had so gnawn the walls that it had been found necessary to prop up and shore the ceilings of the dormitories, because stones became detached and fell on the prisoners' beds. In spite of this antiquity, the error was committed of confining in the New Building the most dangerous prisoners, and placing in it the "heavy cases," as is said in the prison jargon. The New Building contained four sleeping-wards, one above the other, and a garret-floor called the "Fine Air." A large stove pipe, probably belonging to some old kitchen of the Ducs de la Force, started from the ground-floor, passed through the four storeys, cut in two the sleeping wards, in which it figured as a sort of flattened pillar, and issued through a hole in the roof. Gueulemer and Brujon were in the same ward, and had been placed through precaution on the ground-floor. Accident willed it that the head of their beds rested against the stove pipe. Thénardier was exactly above their heads in the attic called Fine Air.

The passer-by, who stops in the Rue Culture Sainte Catherine, after passing the Fireman's barracks, and in front of the Bath-house gateway, sees a court-yard full of flowers and shrubs in boxes, at the end of which is a small white rotunda with two

wings, enlivened by green shutters, the bucolic dream of Jean Jacques. Not ten years ago there rose above this rotunda a black, enormous, frightful, naked wall, which was the outer wall of la Force. This wall behind this rotunda was like a glimpse of Milton caught behind Berquin. High though it was, this wall was surmounted by an even blacker roof, which could be seen beyond,—it was the roof of the New Building.

Four dormer windows protected by bars could be seen in it, and they were the windows of Fine Air, and a chimney passed through the roof, which was the chimney of the sleeping-wards. Fine Air, the attic-floor of the New Building, was a species of large hall, closed with triple gratings and iron-lined doors, starred with enormous nails. When you entered by the north end, you had on your left the four dormers, and on your right, facing these, four square and spacious cages separated by narrow passages, built up to breast-height of masonry, and the rest to the roof of iron bars. Thénardier had been confined in solitary punishment since the night of Feb 3. It was never discovered how, or by what connivance, he succeeded in procuring and concealing a bottle of that prepared wine, invented, so 'tis said, by Desrues, in which a narcotic is mixed, and which the band of the Endormeurs rendered celebrated. There are in many prisons treacherous turnkeys, half gaolers, half robbers, who assist in escapes, sell to the police a faithless domesticity, and "make the handle of the salad-basket dance."

On this very night, then, when little Gavroche picked up the two straying children, Brujon and Gueulemer, who knew that Babet, who had escaped that same morning, was waiting for them in the street with Montparnasse, gently rose, and began breaking open with a nail which Brujon had found the stove-pipe against which their beds were. The rubbish fell on Brujon's bed, so that it was not heard, and the gusts of wind mingled with the thunder shook the doors on their hinges, and produced a frightful and hideous row in the prison. Those prisoners who awoke pretended to fall asleep again, and left Brujon and Gueulemer to do as they pleased; and Brujon was skilful and Gueulemer was vigorous. Before any sound had reached the watchman sleeping in the grated cell which looked into the ward, the wall was broken through, the chimney escaladed, the iron trellice-work which closed the upper opening of the chimney forced, and the two formidable bandits

were on the roof. The rain and the wind were tremendous and the roof was slippery.

"What a fine night for an escape!" said Brujon.

An abyss of six feet in width and eighty feet deep separated them from the surrounding wall, and at the bottom of this abyss they could see a sentry's musket gleaming in the darkness. They fastened to the ends of the chimney bars which they had just broken the rope which Brujon had woven in the cell, threw the other end over the outer wall, crossed the abyss at a bound, clung to the coping of the wall, bestraddled it, glided in turn along the rope to a little roof which joins the Bath-house, pulled their rope to them, jumped into the yard of the Bath-house, pulled the porter's string, opened the gateway, and found themselves in the street. Not three-quarters of an hour had elapsed since they were standing on the bed, nail in hand, and with their plan in their heads; a few minutes after, they had rejoined Babet and Montparnasse, who were prowling in the neighbourhood. On drawing the cord to them they broke it, and a piece had remained fastened to the chimney on the roof, but they had met with no other accident beyond almost entirely skinning their fingers. On this night Thénardier was warned, though it was impossible to discover how, and did not go to sleep. At about one in the morning, when the night was very black, he saw two shadows passing in the rain and gusts, the window opposite his cage. One stopped just long enough to give a look; it was Brujon. Thénardier saw him, and understood—that was enough for him. Thénardier, reported to be a burglar, and detained on the charge of attempting to obtain money at night by violence, was kept under constant watch, and a sentry, relieved every two hours, walked in front of his cage with a loaded musket. The Fine Air was lighted by a sky-light, and the prisoner had on his feet a pair of fetters weighing fifty pounds. Every day at four in the afternoon, a turnkey, escorted by two mastiffs—such things still happened at that day—entered his cage, placed near his bed a black loaf of two pounds' weight, a water-jug, and a bowl of very weak broth in which a few beans floated, inspected his fetters, and tapped the bars. This man with his dogs returned twice during the night.

Thénardier had obtained permission to keep a sort of iron pin which he used to nail his bread to the wall, in order as he

said, " to preserve it from the rats." As Thénardier was under a constant watch, this pin did not seem dangerous : still it was remembered at a later day that a turnkey said, " It would have been better only to leave him a wooden skewer." At two in the morning the sentry, who was an old soldier, was changed, and a recruit substituted for him. A few minutes after, the man with the dogs paid his visit, and went away without having noticed anything, except the youth and peasant look of the " Tourlourou." Two hours after, when they came to relieve this conscript, they found him asleep, and lying like a log by the side of Thénardier's cage. As for the prisoner, he was no longer there ; his several fetters lay on the ground, and there was a hole in the ceiling of his cage, and another above it in the roof. A plank of his bed had been torn out and carried off, for it could not be found. In the cell was also found the half-empty bottle, containing the rest of the drugged wine with which the young soldier had been sent to sleep. The soldier's bayonet had disappeared. At the moment when all this was discovered, Thénardier was supposed to be out of reach ; the truth was, that he was no longer in the New Building, but was still in great danger. Thénardier, on reaching the roof of the New Building, found the remainder of Brujon's rope hanging from the chimney bars, but as the broken cord was much too short, he was unable to cross the outer wall as Brujon and Gueulemer had done.

When you turn out of the Rue des Ballets into the Rue du Roi de Sicile, you notice almost directly on your right a dirty hole. In the last century a house stood here, of which only the back wall exists, a perfect ruin of a wall which rises to the height of a third storey between the adjacent buildings. This ruin can be recognized by two large square windows, still visible ; the centre one, the one nearest the right-hand gable, is barred by a shored-up beam, and through these windows could be seen, formerly, a lofty lugubrious wall, which was a portion of the outer wall of la Force. The gap which the demolished house has left in the street is half filled up with a hoarding of rotten planks, supported by five stone pillars, and inside is a small hut built against the still standing ruin. The hoarding has a door in it, which, a few years ago, was merely closed with a hasp. It was the top of this ruin which Thénardier had attained a little after three in the morning.

How did he get there? This was never explained or understood. The lightning flashes must at once have impeded and helped him. Did he employ the ladders and scaffolding of the slaters to pass from roof to roof, over the buildings of the Charlemagne yard, those of the St. Louis yard, the outer, and thence reach the ruined wall in the Rue du Roi de Sicile? But there were in this passage solutions of continuity, which seemed to render it impossible. Had he laid the plank from his bed as a bridge from the roof of Fine Air to the outer wall, and crawled on his stomach along the coping, all round the prison till he reached the ruin? But the outer wall of la Force was very irregular, it rose and sank; it was low at the Sappers' barracks, and rose again at the Bath-house; it was intersected by buildings, and had everywhere drops and right angles; and then, too, the sentries must have seen the fugitive's dark outline,—and thus the road taken by Thénardier remains almost inexplicable. Had he, illumined by that frightful thirst for liberty which changes precipices into moats, iron bars into reeds, a cripple into an athlete, a gouty patient into a bird, stupidity into instinct, instinct into intellect, and intellect into genius, invented and improvised a third mode of escape? No one ever knew.

It is not always possible to explain the marvels of an escape; the man who breaks prison is, we repeat, inspired, there is a flash in the mysterious light of the flight; the effort made for deliverance is no less surprise than the soaring toward the sublime, and people say of an escaped robber, "How did he manage to scale that roof?" in the same way as they say of Corneille, "Where did he find his *qu'il mourût?*" However this may be, Thénardier, dripping with perspiration, wet through with rain, with his clothes in rags, his hands scarified, his elbows bleeding, and his knees lacerated, reached the ruin-wall, lay down full length on it, and then his strength failed him. A perpendicular wall as high as a three-storeyed house separated him from the street, and the rope he had was too short. He waited there, pale, exhausted, despairing, though just now so hopeful, still covered by night, but saying to himself that day would soon come; horrified at the thought that he should shortly hear it strike four from the neighbouring clock of St Paul, the hour when the sentry would be changed, and be found asleep under the

hole in the roof. Thénardier regarded with stupor at such a depth below, and in the light of the lamps, the wet black pavement—that desired and terrific pavement which was death, and which was liberty. He asked himself whether his three accomplices had succeeded in escaping, whether they were waiting for him, and if they would come to his help? He listened: excepting a patrol, no one had passed through the street since he had been lying there. Nearly all the market carts from Montreuil, Charonne, Vincennes, and Bercy came into town by the Rue St Antoine.

Four o'clock struck, and Thénardier trembled. A few minutes after, the startled and confused noise which follows the discovery of an escape broke out in the prison. The sound of doors being opened and shut, the creaking of gates on their hinges, the tumult at the guard-room, and the clang of musket-butts on the pavement of the yards, reached his ears; lights flashed past the grated windows of the sleeping wards a torch ran along the roof of the New Building, and the sappers were called out. Three caps which the torch lit up in the rain, came and went along the roofs, and at the same time Thénardier saw, in the direction of the Bastille, a livid gleam mournfully whitening the sky. He was on the top of a wall ten inches wide, lying in the pitiless rain, with a gulf on his right hand and on his left, unable to stir, suffering from the dizziness of a possible fall and the horror of a certain arrest, and his mind like the clapper of a bell, went from one of these ideas to the other: "Dead if I fall, caught if I remain." In this state of agony he suddenly saw, in the still perfectly dark street, a man, who glided along the walls and came back from the Rue Pavée, stop in the gap over which Thénardier was, as it were, suspended. This man was joined by a second, who walked with similar caution, then by a third, and then by a fourth. When these men were together, one of them raised the hasp of the hoarding gate, and all four entered the enclosure where the hut is, and stood exactly under Thénardier. These men had evidently selected this place to consult in, in order not to be seen by passers-by, or the sentry guarding the wicket of la Force a few paces distant. We must say, too, that the rain kept this sentry confined to his box. Thénardier, unable to distinguish their faces, listened to their remarks with the desparate attention of a wretch who feels himself lost.

He felt something like hope pass before his eyes, when he heard these men talking slang. The first said, in a low voice, but distinctly, something which we had better translate.

"Let us be off. What are we doing here?"

The second replied,—

It is raining hard enough to put out the fire of hell. And then the police will pass soon; besides, there is a sentry on. We shall get ourselves arrested here."

Two words employed, *icigo* and *icicaille*, which both mean *here*, and which belong, the first to the flash language of the barrières, and the second to that of the Temple, were rays of light for Thénardier. By the icigo he recognized Brujon, who was a prowler at the barrières, and by icicaille Babet, who, among all his other trades, had been a second-hand clothes-dealer at the Temple. The antique slang of the great century is only talked now at the Temple, and Babet was the only man who spoke it in its purity. Had it not been for the icicaille, Thénardier could not have recognized him, for he had completely altered his voice. In the mean while the third man had interfered.

"There is nothing to hurry us; so let us wait a little. What is there to tell us that he does not want us?"

Through this, which was only French, Thénardier recognized Montparnasse, whose pride it was to understand all the slang dialects, and not speak one of them. As for the fourth man, he held his tongue, but his wide shoulders denounced him, and Thénardier did not hesitate; it was Gueulemer. Brujon replied almost impetuously, but still in a low voice,—

"What is that you are saying? The landlord has not been able to escape. A man must be a clever hand to tear up his shirt and cut his sheets in slips to make a rope; to make holes in doors; manufacture false papers; make false keys; file his fetters through; hang his rope out of the window; hide and disguise himself. The old chap cannot have done this, for he does not know how to work."

Babet added, still in the correct classic slang which Poiailler and Cartouche spoke, and which is to the new, bold, and coloured slang which Brujon employed what the language of Racine is to that of André Chénier.

"Your landlord has been caught in the act, for he is only

an apprentice. He has let himself be duped by a spy, perhaps by a sheep, who played the pal. Listen, Montparnasse; do you hear those shouts in the prison? You saw all those candles; he is caught again, and will get off with twenty years. I am not frightened, I am no coward, as is well known, but there is nothing to be done, and we shall be trapped. Do not feel offended, but come with us, and let us drink a bottle of old wine together."

"Friends must not be left in a difficulty," Montparnasse growled.

"I tell you he is caught again," Brujon resumed, "and at this moment the landlord is not worth a halfpenny. We can do nothing for him, so let us be off. I feel at every moment as if a policeman were holding me in his hand."

Montparnasse resisted but feebly; the truth is, that these four men, with the fidelity which bandits have of never deserting each other, had prowled the whole night round la Force, in spite of the peril they incurred, in the hope of seeing Thénardier appear on the top of some wall. But the night which became really too favourable, for the rain rendered all the streets deserted, the cold which attacked them, their dripping clothes, their worn-out shoes, the alarming noises which had broken out in the prison, the hours which had elapsed, the patrols they had met, the hope which departed, and the fear that returned,—all this urged them to retreat. Montparnasse himself, who was perhaps Thénardier's son-in-law in a certain sense, yielded, and in a moment they would be gone. Thénardier gasped on his wall as the shipwrecked crew of the *Méduse* did on their raft, when they watched the ship which they had sighted, fade away on the horizon. He did not dare call to them, for a cry overheard might ruin everything, but he had an idea, a last idea, an inspiration,—he took from his pocket the end of Brujon's rope, which he had detached from the chimney of the New Building, and threw it at their feet.

"A cord!" said Babet.

"My cord!" said Brujon.

"The landlord is there," said Montparnasse. They raised their eyes, and Thénardier thrust out his head a little.

"Quiet," said Montparnasse; "have you the other end of the rope, Brujon?"

"Yes."

"Fasten the two ends together, we will throw the rope to him, he will attach it to the wall, and it will be long enough for him to come down."

Thénardier ventured to raise his voice,—

"I am wet through."

"We'll warm you."

"I cannot stir."

"You will slip down, and we will catch you."

"My hands are swollen."

"Only just fasten the rope to the wall."

"I can't."

"One of us must go up," said Montparnasse.

"Three storeys!" Brujon ejaculated.

An old plaster conduit pipe, which had served as a chimney for a stove, formerly lit in the hut, ran along the wall almost to the spot where Thénardier was lying. This pipe, which at that day was full of cracks and holes, has since fallen down, but its traces may be seen. It was very narrow.

"It would be possible to mount by that," said Montparnasse.

"By that pipe?" Babet exclaimed; "a man? oh no, a boy is required."

"Yes, a boy," Brujon said in affirmative.

"Where can we find one?" Gueulemer said.

"Wait a minute," Montparnasse said, "I have it."

He gently opened the hoarding door, assured himself that there was no passer-by in the street, went out, shut the gate cautiously after him, and ran off in the direction of the Bastille. Seven or eight minutes elapsed, eight thousand centuries for Thénardier; Babet, Brujon, and Gueulemer did not open their lips: the door opened again, and Montparnasse came in, panting and leading Gavroche. The rain continued to make the street completely deserted. Little Gavroche stepped into the enclosure, and looked calmly at the faces of the bandits. The rain was dripping from his hair, and Gueulemer said to him,—

"Brat, are you a man?"

Gavroche shrugged his shoulders, and replied,—

"A child like me is a man, and men like you are children."

"What a well-hung tongue the brat has!" Babet exclaimed.

"The boy of Paris is not made of wet paste," Brujon added.

"What do you want of me?" said Gavroche.

Montparnasse answered—

"Climb up that pipe."

"With this rope," Babet remarked.

"And fasten it," Brujon continued.

"At the top of the wall," Babet added.

"To the cross bar of the window," Brujon said, finally.

"What next?" asked Gavroche.

"Here it is," said Gueulemer.

The gamin examined the rope, the chimney, the wall, and the window, and gave that indescribable and disdainful smack of the lips which signifies, "What is it?"

"There is a man up there whom you will save," Montparnase continued,—

"Are you willing?" Brujon asked.

"Ass!" the lad replied, as if the question seemed to him extraordinary, and took off his shoes.

Gueulemer seized Gavroche by one arm, placed him on the roof of the pent-house, where mouldering planks bent under the boy's weight, and handed him the rope, which Brujon had joined again during the absence of Montparnasse. The gamin turned to the chimney, which it was an easy task to enter by a large crevice close to the roof. At the moment when he was going to ascend, Thénardier, who saw safety and life approaching, leant over the edge of the wall; the first gleam of day whitened his dark forehead, his livid cheek-bones, his sharp savage nose, and his bristling grey beard, and Gavroche recognized him.

"Hilloh!" he said, "it's my father; well, that won't stop me."

And, taking the rope between his teeth, he resolutely commenced his ascent. He reached the top of the wall, straddled across it like a horse, and securely fastened the rope to the topmast cross bar of the window. A moment after, Thénardier was in the street. So soon as he touched the pavement, so soon as he felt himself out of danger, he was no longer wearied, chilled, or trembling; the terrible

things he had passed through were dissipated like smoke, and all his strange and ferocious intellect was re-aroused, and found itself erect and free, ready to march onward. The first remark this man made was,—

"Well, whom are we going to eat?"

It is unnecessary to explain the meaning of this frightfully transparent sentence, which signifies at once killing, assassinating, and robbing, The real meaning of *to eat* is to *devour*.

"We must get into hiding," said Brujon. "We will understand each other in three words, and then separate at once. There was an affair that seemed good in the Rue Plumet, a deserted street, an isolated house, old rust-eaten railings looking on a garden, and lone women.

"Well, why not try it?" Thénardier asked.

"Your daughter Eponine went to look at the thing," Babet answered.

"And gave Magnon a biscuit," Brujon added; "there's nothing to be done there."

"The girl's no fool," said Thénardier, "still we must see."

"Yes, yes," Brujon remarked, "we must see."

Not one of the men seemed to notice Gavroche, who, during this colloquy, was sitting on one of the posts; he waited some minutes, perhaps in the hope that his father would turn to him, and then put on his shoes again saying,—

"Is it all over? You men don't want me any more, I suppose, as I've got you out of the scrape? I'm off, for I must go and wake my brats."

And he went off. The five men left the enclosure in turn. When Gavroche had disappeared round the corner of the Rue des Ballets, Babet took Thénardier on one side.

"Do you notice that brat?" he asked him.

"What brat?"

"The one who climbed up the wall and handed you the rope."

"Not particularly."

"Well, I don't know, but I fancy it's your son."

"Nonsense," said Thénardier; "do you think so?"

CHAPTER XIX

THE bandits, deeming the house in the Rue Plumet one which they might safely plunder, had sent Eponine to watch

it ; but on discovering by whom it was inhabited, she began by keeping the bandits aloof from the house, then led Marius to it, and after several days of ecstasy before the railings, Marius, impelled by that force which attracts iron to the loadstone, and the lover toward the stones of the house in which she whom he loves resides, had eventually entered Cosette's garden, as Romeo did Juliet's. So long as the month of May of that year, 1832, lasted, there were every night in this poor untrimmed garden, and under this thicket, which daily became more fragrant and more thick, two beings composed of all the chastities and all the innocences, overflowing with all the felicities of heaven. Once in the moonlight, Cosette stooped to pick up something on the ground, and her dress opened and displayed her neck. Marius turned his eyes away.

What passed between these two lovers ? Nothing, they adored each other. At night, when they were there, this garden seemed a living and sacred spot. All the flowers opened around them and sent them their incense ; they opened their souls and spread them over the flowers. And they uttered words of love at which the trees shivered—words which, though mere nothings, by some magic power were sufficient to trouble and affect all this nature. Take away from these whispers of two lovers the melody which issues from the soul, and accompanies them like a lyre, and what is left is only a shadow, and you say, " What ! is it only that ? " Well, yes, child's-play, repetitions, absurdities, foolishness, all that is the most sublime and profound in the world ! the only things which are worth the trouble of being said and being listened to. The man who has never heard, the man who has never uttered, these absurdities and poor things is an imbecile and a wicked man.

They idolized each other. The permanent and the immutable exist ; a couple love, they laugh, they make little pouts with their lips, they intertwine their fingers, and that does not prevent eternity. Two lovers conceal themselves in a garden in the twilight, in the invisible, with the birds and the roses, they fascinate each other in the darkness with their souls, which they place in their eyes, they mutter, they whisper, and during this period immense constellations of planets fill infinity.

Marius never set foot in the house when he was with Co-

sette; they concealed themselves in a niche near the steps, so as not to be seen or heard from the street, and sat there often contenting themselves with the sole conversation of pressing hands twenty times a minute, and gazing at the branches of the trees. At such moments, had a thunderbolt fallen within thirty feet of them, they would not have noticed it, so profoundly was the reverie of the one absorbed and plunged in the reverie of the other. It was a limpid purity, and the houses were all white, and nearly all alike. The whole garden was between them and the street, and each time that Marius came in and out he carefully restored the bar of the railings, so that no disarrangement was visible. He went away generally at midnight, and went back to Courfeyrac's lodgings.

One evening Marius was going to the rendezvous along the Boulevard des Invalides; he was walking as usual with his head down, and as he was turning the corner of the Rue Plumet, he heard some one say close to him—

"Good evening, Monsieur Marius."

He raised his head, and recognized Eponine. This produced a singular effect: he had not once thought of this girl since the day when she led him to the Rue Plumet; he had not seen her again, and she had entirely left his mind. He had only motives to be grateful to her, he owed her his present happiness, and yet it annoyed him to meet her. At any other time Marius would have been very different to Eponine, but, absorbed by Cosette, he had not very clearly comprehended that this Eponine was Eponine Thénardier, and that she bore a name written in his father's will—that name to which he would have so ardently devoted himself a few months previously. Hence he replied with some embarrassment,—

"Ah, is it you, Eponine?"

"Why do you treat me so coldly? Have I done you any injury?"

"No," he answered.

Certainly he had no fault to find with her; on the contrary. Still he felt that he could not but say "you" to Eponine, now that he said "thou" to Cosette. As he remained silent, she exclaimed,—

"Tell me—"

Then she stopped, and it seemed as if words failed this creature, who was formerly so impudent and bold. She tried to smile and could not, so continued,—

"Well?"

Then she was silent again, and looked down on the ground.

"Good night, Monsieur Marius," she suddenly said, and went away.

The next day—it was June 3rd, 1832, a date to which we draw attention owing to the grave events which were at that moment hanging over the horizon of Paris in the state of lightning-charged-clouds—Marius at nightfall was following the same road as on the previous evening, with the same ravishing thoughts in his heart, when he saw between the boulevard trees Eponine coming toward him. Two days running,—that was too much; so he sharply turned back, changed his course, and went to the Rue Plumet by the Rue Monsieur. This caused Eponine to follow him as far as the Rue Plumet, a thing she had never done before; hitherto, she had contented herself with watching him as he passed along the boulevard, without attempting to meet him: last evening was the first time she ventured to address him. She saw him move the railing-bar aside and step into the garden.

She went up to the railing, felt the bars in turn, and easily distinguished the one which Marius had removed. With a sigh she sat down on the stone work of the railing, close to the bar, as if she were guarding it. She remained thus, concealed by the darkness, for more than an hour without stirring or breathing. About ten o'clock at night, one of the two or three passers along the Rue Plumet, an old belated citizen, who was hurrying along the deserted and ill-famed street, while passing the railing, heard a dull menacing voice saying,—

"I am not surprised now that he comes every evening."

The passer-by looked around him, saw nobody, did not dare to peer into this dark corner, and felt horribly alarmed. He redoubled his speed, and was quite right in doing so, for in a few minutes six men, who were walking separately, and at some distance from each other, under the walls, and who might have been taken for a drunken patrol, entered the Rue Plumet: the first who reached the railings stopped and waited

for the rest, and a second after, all six were together, and began talking in whispered slang,—

"It's here," said one of them.

"Have you got some mastic to break a pane?"

"Yes."

"The railings are old," remarked another, "and there seems to be no dog in the garden."

A man, who had not yet opened his mouth, began examining the railings as Eponine had done an hour ago, and thus reached the bar which Marius had unfastened. Just as he was about to seize this bar, a hand, suddenly emerging from the darkness, clutched his arm; he felt himself roughly thrust back, and a hoarse voice whispered to him, "There's a cab (a dog)." At the same time he saw a pale girl standing in front of him. The man had that emotion which is always produced by things unexpected; his hair stood hideously on end. Nothing is more formidable to look at than startled wild beasts. He fell back and stammered,—

"Who is this she-devil?"

"Your daughter."

"Well, what are you doing here? what do you want?" Thénardier exclaimed, as far as is possible to exclaim in a whisper. "Have you come to prevent us from working?"

"You know very well that I am no fool," Eponine replied, "and people generally believe me. I have done you a service now and then; well, I have made inquiries, and you would run a needless risk. I swear to you that there is nothing to be done in this house. They are very poor people, and there isn't a penny-piece in the house."

"Go to the devil," cried Thénardier; "when we have turned the house topsy-turvy, and placed the cellar at top, and the attics at the bottom, we will tell you what there is inside, and whether they are francs, sous, or liards."

And he thrust her away that they might pass.

She leant against the railings, faced these six men armed to the teeth, to whom night gave demoniac faces, and said in a firm, low voice,—

"Well, I will not let you!"

They stopped in stupefaction, too amazed even to smile. She continued,—

"Friends, listen to me, for it's now my turn to speak. If

you enter this garden, or touch this railing, I will scream, knock at doors, wake people; I will have you all six seized, and call the police."

"She is capable of doing it," Thénardier whispered to Brujon and the other bandits.

She shook her head, and added,—

"Beginning with my father."

Thénardier approached her.

"Not so close, my good man," she said.

He fell back, growling between his teeth, "Why, what is the matter?" and added, "the b——."

She burst into a terrible laugh.

"As you please, but you shall not enter; but I am not the daughter of a dog, since I am the whelp of a wolf. You are six, but what do I care for that? You are men, and I am a woman. You won't frighten me, I can tell you, and you shall not enter this house, because it does not please me. If you come nearer I bark, and I told you there was a dog, and I am it. You can't frighten me with your angry looks. What asses these men must be to think they can frighten a girl! You have got dolls of mistresses who crawl under the bed when you talk big, but I am afraid of nothing!"

She fixed her eye on Thénardier, and said,—"Not even of you, father."

Then she continued, as she turned her spectral, blood-shot eyeballs on each of the bandits in turn,—

"What do I care whether I am picked up to-morrow on the pavement of the Rue Plumet stabbed by my father, or am found within a year in the nets of St Cloud or on Swan's Island, among old rotting corks and drowned dogs!"

She was compelled to break off, for she was attacked by a dry cough, and her breath came from her weak, narrow chest like the death-rattle.

"There's something the matter with her," said Babet. "Can she be in love with the dog? And, yet, it's a pity to miss the affair. There are two women who live alone, an old cove who lives in a yard, and very decent curtains up to the windows. The old swell must be a Jew, and I consider the affair a good one."

"Well, do you fellows go in," Montparnasse exclaimed,

" and do the trick. I will remain here with the girl, and if she stirs—"

He let the knife which he held in his hand glisten in the lamp-light. Thénardier did not say a word, and seemed ready for anything they pleased. Brujon, who was a bit of an oracle, and who, indeed, had " put up the job," had not yet spoken, and seemed thoughtful. He was supposed to recoil at nothing, and it was notorious that he had plundered a police-office through sheer bravado. Moreover, he wrote verses and songs, which gave him a great authority. Babet questioned him.

" Have you nothing to say, Brujon ? "

Brujon remained silent for a moment, then tossed his head in several different ways, and at length decided on speaking.

" Look here. I saw this morning two sparrows fighting, and to-night I stumble over a quarrelsome woman : all that is bad, so let us be off."

They went away, and while doing so Montparnasse muttered,—

" No matter, if you had been agreeable I would have cut her throat."

Babet replied,—

" I wouldn't, for I never strike a lady."

At the corner of the street they stopped and exchanged in a low voice this enigmatical dialogue.

" Where shall we go and sleep to-night ? "

" Under Paris."

" Have you your key about you, Thénardier ? "

" Of course."

Eponine, who did not take her eyes off them, saw them return by the road along which they had come. She rose and crawled after them, along the walls and the houses. She followed them thus along the boulevard ; there they separated, and she saw the six men bury themselves in the darkness, where they seemed to fade away.

While these bandits fled before a girl, Marius was by Cosette's side. He had found her sad, she had been crying, and her eyes were red. It was the first cloud in this admirable dream. Marius's first remark was,—

" What is the matter with you ? "

And she replied,—

"I will tell you. My father told me this morning to hold myself in readiness, for he had business to attend to, and we were probably going away."

Marius shuddered from head to foot. He could not find a word to say, and Cosette merely noticed that his hand was very cold. She said to him in her turn,—

"What is the matter with you?"

"I do not understand what you said," he answered.

She continued,—

"This morning my father told me to prepare my clothes and hold myself ready, that he would give me his linen to put in a portmanteau, that he was obliged to make a journey, that we were going away, that we must have a large trunk for myself and a small one for him, to get all this ready within a week, and that we should probably go to England."

"Why, it is monstrous!" Marius exclaimed.

It is certain that, at this moment, in Marius's mind, no abuse of power equalled in ferocity this one,—M. Fauchelevent taking his daughter to England because he had business to attend to. He asked, in a faint voice,—

"And when will you start?"

"He did not say when."

"And when will you return?"

"He did not tell me."

And Marius rose and said coldly,—

"Will you go, Cosette?"

"What can I do?" she said clasping her hands.

"So you are determined to go?"

Cosette seized Marius's hand, and pressed it as sole reply.

"Very well," said Marius, "in that case I shall go elsewhere."

Cosette felt the meaning of this remark even more than she comprehended it; she turned so pale that her face became white in the darkness, and stammered,—

"What do you mean?"

Marius looked at her, then slowly raised his eyes to heaven, and replied,—

"Cosette, I have never pledged my word of honour to any one, because it frightens me, and I feel that my father is by the side of it. Well, I pledge you my most sacred word of honour that if you go away I shall die."

There was in the accent with which he uttered these words such a solemn and calm melancholy that Cosette trembled, and she felt that chill which is produced by the passing of a sombre and true thing. In her terror she ceased to weep.

"Now listen to me," he said; "do not expect me to-morrow."

"Why not?"

"Do not expect me till the day after."

"Oh, why?"

"You will see."

"A day without your coming!—oh, it is impossible."

"Let us sacrifice a day to have, perhaps, one whole life."

Marius took her head between his two hands, she stood on tip-toe to reach him, and tried to see the hopes suggested by these words in his eyes. Marius added,—

"By-the-bye, you must know my address, for something might happen; I live with my friend Courfeyrac, at No. 16, Rue de la Verrerie."

He felt in his pockets, took out a knife, and scratched the address on the plaster of the wall. In the meanwhile, Cosette had begun looking in his eyes again.

"Tell me your thought, Marius, for you have one. Oh, tell it to me, so that I may pass a good night."

"My thought is this; it is impossible that GOD can wish to separate us. Expect me the day after to-morrow."

"What shall I do till then?" Cosette said "You are in the world, and come and go; how happy men are! but I shall remain all alone. Oh, I shall be so sad! what will you do to-morrow night, tell me?"

"I shall try something"

"In that case I shall pray to Heaven, and think of you, so that you may succeed. But you will come early the next evening, and I shall expect you at nine o'clock exactly. You hear; I shall be in the garden as it is striking nine."

"And I too."

And without saying a word both fell into each other's arms without noticing that their lips were joined together, while their upraised eyes, overflowing with ecstasy, contemplated the stars. When Marius left, the street was deserted, for it was the moment when Eponine followed the bandits into the boulevard.

Father Gillenormand at this period had just passed his ninety-first birth-day, and still lived with his daughter at No. 6, Rue des Filles-de-Calvaire, in the old house, which was his own property. The revolution of July had not exasperated him for more than six months. The truth is, that the old man was filled with grief. For four years he had been awaiting Marius with the conviction that the young scamp would ring his bell some day, and now he had begun to say to himself that Marius might remain away a little too long. M. Gillenormand, without confessing it to himself however, had never loved a mistress as he loved Marius.

Mademoiselle Gillenormand failed in her attempt to substitute her favourite, the officer of lancers, in Marius's place. Theodule had met with no success, and M. Gillenormand refused to accept the *qui pro quo*. The fact is, as he was a man of sense and comparison, Theodule only served to make him regret Marius the more.

On the evening of June 4th, he was alone in his apartment with the pastoral hangings, with his feet on the andirons, half enveloped in his nine-leaved Coromandel screen, sitting at a table on which two candles burned under a green shade, and holding a book in his hand, which he was not reading. Father Gillenormand was thinking of Marius bitterly and lovingly. He was explaining to himself that there was no longer any reason for Marius's return, that if he had meant to come home he would have done so long before, and all idea of it must be given up. In the depth of this reverie his old servant Basque came in and asked,—

"Can you receive M. Marius, sir?"

The old man sat up, livid, and like a corpse which is roused by a galvanic shock.

"M. Marius! who?"

"I do not know," Basque replied. "It was Nicolette who said to me just now, 'There is a young man here, say it is M. Marius.'"

Father Gillenormand stammered in a low voice, "Show him in," and he remained in the same attitude, with hanging head and eye fixed on the door. It opened, and a young man appeared—it was Marius, who stopped in the door-way as if wanting to be asked in. His almost wretched clothes could not be seen in the obscurity produced by the shade, and only his calm, grave, but strangely sorrowful face could be distin-

guished. M Gillenormand felt inclined to open his arms and call the boy to him, his entrails were swelled with ravishment, affectionate words welled up and overflowed his bosom. At length all this tenderness burst forth and reached his lips, and through the contrast which formed the basis of his character a harshness issued from it. He said roughly,—

"What do you want here? Have you come to ask my pardon? have you recognised your error?"

Marius clasped his hands, advanced a step, and said, in a weak, trembling voice,—

"Take pity on me, sir."

"Well, what is it you want of me?"

"I am aware, sir," said Marius, "that my presence here displeases you, but I have only come to ask one thing of you, and then I shall go away at once."

"You are a fool," the old man said; "who told you to go away?"

M. Gillenormand folded his arms, a gesture which with him was peculiarly imperious, and bitterly addressed Marius,—

"Let us come to an end. You have come to ask something of me, you say! Well, what is it? speak."

"Sir," said Marius, with the look of man who feels that he is going to fall over a precipice, "I have come to ask your permission to marry."

M. Gillenormand rang the bell, and Basque poked his head into the door.

"Send my daughter here."

A second later, the door opened again, and Mlle Gillenormand did not enter, but showed herself. Marius was standing silently, with drooping arms and the face of a criminal, while M. Gillenormand walked up and down the room. He turned to his daughter and said to her,—

"It is nothing. This is M. Marius, wish him good evening. This gentleman desires to marry, that will do. Be off."

The sound of the old man's sharp, hoarse voice announced a mighty fury raging within him. The aunt looked at Marius in terror, seemed scarce to recognize him, did not utter a syllable, and disappeared before her father's breath, like a straw before a hurricane. In the meanwhile M. Gillenormand had turned back, and was now leaning against the mantel-piece.

"You marry! at the age of one-and-twenty! you have settled all that, and have only a permission to ask, a mere formality! Sit down, sir."

He stopped, and before Marius had time to answer, he added violently,—

"Ah! have you a profession, a fortune? how much do you earn by your trade as a lawyer?"

"Nothing," said Marius, with a sort of fierceness and almost stern resolution.

"In that case, I presume that the young lady is wealthy?"

"Like myself."

"What? no dowry? no expectations?"

"I do not think so."

"And what is her name?"

"Mademoiselle Fauchelevent."

"Ptt!" said the old gentleman.

"Sir!" Marius excaimed.

M. Gillenormand interrupted him, with the air of a man who is talking to himself,—

"That is it, one-and-twenty, no profession, twelve hundred livres a year, and the Baroness Pontmercy will go and buy a penn'orth of parsley at the green-grocer's."

"Sir," Marius replied in the wildness of the last vanishing hope, "I implore you, I conjure you in Heaven's name, with clasped hands I throw myself at your feet, sir, permit me to marry her!"

The old man burst into a sharp, melancholy laugh, through which he coughed and spoke,—

"Ah, ah, ah! you said to yourself, "I'll go and see that old periwig, that absurd ass! What a pity that I am not five-and-twenty yet, how I would send him a respectful summons! Old fool, you are too glad to see me, I feel inclined to marry Miss Lord-knows-who, the daughter of M. Lord-knows-what. She has no shoes, and I have no shirt, that matches; I am inclined to throw into the river my career, my youth, my future, my life, and take a plunge into wretchedness with a wife round my neck—that is my idea, and you must consent:' and the old fossil will consent. Go in, my lad, fasten your paving stone round your neck, marry your Pousselevent, your Coupelevent,—never, sir, never!"

"Father—"

"Never!"

Marius lost all hope through the accent with which this "never" was pronounced. He crossed the room slowly, with hanging head, tottering, and more like a man that is dying than one who is going away. M. Gillenormand looked after him, and at the moment when the door opened, and Marius was about to leave the room, he took four strides with the senile vivacity of an impetuous and spoiled old man, seized Marius by the collar, pulled him back energetically into the room, threw him into an easy chair, and said,—

"Tell me all about it."

The word *father* which had escaped from Marius's lips produced this revolution. The ancestor had made way for the grandfather.

"Well, speak; tell me of your love episodes, tell me all. Sapristi! how stupid young men are!"

"My father!" Marius resumed.

The old gentleman's entire face was lit up with an indescribable radiance.

"Yes, that is it, call me father, and you'll see."

There was now something so gentle, so good, so open, and so paternal, in this sharpness, that Marius, in this sudden passage from discouragement to hope, was, as it were, stunned and intoxicated. As he was seated near the table the light of the candles fell on his seedy attire, which Father Gillenormand studied with amazement.

"Well, father," said Marius.

"What," M. Gillenormand interrupted him, "have you really no money? You are dressed like a thief. Here are one hundred louis to buy a hat with."

"My father," Marius continued, "my kind father. If you only knew how I love her! You cannot imagine it. The first time I saw her was at the Luxembourg, where she came to walk. At the beginning I paid no attention to her, and then I know not how it happened, but I fell in love with her. Oh! how wretched it made me! I see her now every day at her own house, and her father knows nothing about it: just fancy, they are going away, we see each other at night in the garden, her father means to take her to England, and then I said to myself, 'I will go and see my grandfather and tell him about it.' I should go mad first, I should die, I should

throw myself into the water. I must marry her, or else I shall go mad. That is the whole truth, and I do not believe that I have forgotten anything. She lives in a garden with a railing to it, in the Rue Plumet: it is on the side of the Invalides."

Father Gillenormand was sitting radiantly by Marius's side: while listening and enjoying the sound of his voice he enjoyed at the same time a lengthened pinch of snuff. At the words Rue Plumet he broke off his sniffing, and allowed the rest of the snuff to fall on his knees.

"Rue Plumet! did you say Rue Plumet? Only think! Is there not a barrack down there? Oh yes, of course there is: your cousin, Theodule, the officer, the lancer, told me about it—a poppet, my dear fellow, a poppet! And so she receives you behind her father's back, does she? That's all right, and I had affairs of the same sort, more than one. Do you know what a man does in such cases? He does not regard the matter ferociously, he does not hurl himself into matrimony or conclude with marriage and M. le Maire in his scarf. Such a young man goes to his grandfather, who is well inclined after all, and who has always a few rolls of louis in an old drawer, and he says to him, 'Grandpapa, that's how matters stand,' and grandpapa says, 'It is very simple, youth must enjoy itself, and old age be smashed up. I have been young, and you will be old. All right, my lad, you will requite it to your grandson. Here are two hundred pistoles, go and amuse yourself, confound you!' That is the way in which the matter should be arranged; a man does not marry, but that is no obstacle: do you understand?"

Marius, petrified and incapable of uttering a word, shook his head in the negative.

"You goose! make her your mistress!"

Marius turned pale. He rose, picked up his hat, which was on the ground, and walked to the door with a firm, assured step. Then he turned, gave his grandfather a low bow, drew himself up again, and said,—

"Five years ago you outraged my father; to-day you outraged my wife. I have nothing more to ask of you, sir; farewell!"

Father Gillenormand, who was stupefied, opened his mouth, stretched out his arms, strove to rise, and ere he was able

to utter a word, the door had closed again, and Marius had disappeared. The old gentleman remained for a few minutes motionless, and as if thunderstruck. At length he tore himself out of his easy chair, ran to the door as fast as a man can run at ninety-one, opened it, and cried,—

"Help! help!" His daughter appeared, he went on with a lamentable rattle in his throat,—

"Run after him! catch him up! how did I offend him? He is mad and going away! this time he will not return."

He went to the window which looked on the street, opened it with his old trembling hands, bent half his body out of it, while Basque and Nicolette held his skirts, and cried,—

"Marius! Marius! Marius! Marius!"

But Marius could not hear him, for at this very moment he was turning the corner of the Rue St. Louis. The nonagenarian raised his hands twice or thrice to his temples with an expression of agony, tottered back, and sank into an easy chair, pulseless, voiceless, and tearless.

That same day, about four in the afternoon Jean Valjean was seated on one of the most solitary slopes of the Champ de Mars. He had on his workman's jacket and grey canvas trousers, and his long peaked cap concealed his face. He was at present calm and happy by Cosette's side; but, during the last week or fortnight, anxieties of a fresh nature had sprung up. One day, while walking along the boulevard, he noticed Thénardier; thanks to his disguise, Thénardier did not recognize him, but after that Jean Valjean saw him several times again, and now felt a certainty that Thénardier was prowling about the quarter. This was sufficient to make him form a grand resolution, for Thénardier present was every peril at once; moreover, Paris was not quiet. He, therefore, resolved to go to England; he had warned Cosette, and hoped to be off within a week. He was sitting on the slope, revolving in his mind all sorts of thoughts,—Thénardier, the police, the journey, the difficulty of obtaining a passport, and, lastly, an inexplicable fact which had just struck him. On the morning of that very day he, the only person up in the house, and walking in the garden before Cosette's shutters were opened, suddenly perceived this line upon the wall, probably scratched with a nail,—

16, *Rue de la Verrerie.*

It was quite recent, the lines were white on the old black mortar, and a bed of nettles at the foot of the wall was powdered with fine fresh plaster. This had probably been inscribed during the night. What was it? an address? a signal for others, or a warning for himself? In any case, it was evident that the secrecy of the garden was violated, and that strangers entered it. In the midst of his troubled thoughts he perceived, from a shadow which the sun threw, that some one was standing on the crest of the slope immediately behind him. He was just going to turn, when a folded paper fell on his knees, as if a hand had thrown it over his head; he opened the paper, and read these words, written in large characters, and in pencil,—

LEAVE YOUR HOUSE.

Jean Valjean rose smartly, but there was no longer any one on the slope; he looked round him, and perceived a person, taller than a child and shorter than a man, dressed in a grey blouse and dust-coloured cotton-velvet trousers, bestriding the parapet, and slipping down into the moat of the Champ de Mars. Jean Valjean at once went home very pensively.

Marius had left M. Gillenormand's house in a wretched state; he had gone in with very small hopes, and came out with an immense despair. He wandered the whole day about the streets, and awaited the evening with a feverish impatience, for he had but one clear idea left, that at nine o'clock he should see Cosette. At times, while walking along the most deserted boulevards, he imagined that he could hear strange noises in Paris; then he thrust his head out of his reverie, and said,—"Can they be fighting?" At nightfall, at nine o'clock precisely, he was at the Rue Plumet, as he had promised Cosette. He had not seen her for eight-and-forty hours, he was about to see her again.

Marius removed the railing and rushed into the garden Cosette was not at the place where she usually waited for him, and he went to the niche near the terrace, but Cosette was not there. He raised his eyes and saw that the shutters of the house were closed; after walking round the garden, mad with love, terrified, exasperated with grief and anxiety, he rapped at the shutters, like a master who returns home at a late hour. He rapped, he rapped again, at the risk of seeing the window open and the father's frowning face appear, and ask

him,—" What do you want ? " " Cosette ! " he cried : " Cosette ! " There was no answer, and it was all over. All at once he heard a voice which seemed to come from the street, crying through the trees,—

" Are you there, M. Marius ? "

" Yes."

," Monsieur Marius," the voice resumed " your friends are waiting for you at the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrerie."

This voice was not entirely strange to him, and resembled Eponine's rough, hoarse accents. Marius ran to the railings, pulled aside the shifting bar, passed his head through, and saw some one, who seemed to be a young man, running away in the gloaming.

About the same time M. Mabœuf was sinking gradually into a state of extreme poverty. The purse which had fallen so strangely at his feet he carried to the police commissary of the district, as a lost object, placed by the finder at the disposal of the claimants. In other respects M. Mabœuf continued to descend : and the indigo experiments had succeeded no better at the Jardin des Plantes than in his garden of Austerlitz. The previous year he owed his housekeeper her wages, and now he owed his landlord his rent. Nothing was then left him of the labour of his whole life, and he began eating the money produced by the last copies of his *Flora*. When he saw that this poor resource was growing exhausted he gave up his garden, and did not attend to it ; before, and long before, he had given up the two eggs and the slice of beef which he ate from time to time, and now dined on bread and potatoes. He had sold his last articles of furniture, then everything he had in duplicate, in linen, clothes, and coverlets, and then his herbals and plates ; but he still has his most precious books, among them being several of great rarity, such as the " Les Quadrins Historiques de la Bible," the edition of 1560 ; " La Concordance des Bibles," of Pierre de Besse ; " Les Marguerites de la Marguerite," of Jean de la Haye, with a dedication to the Queen of Navarre ; the work on the " duties and dignity of an ambassador," by the Sieur de Villiers Hotman ; a " Florilegium Rabbinicum," of 1644 ; a " Tibullus," of 1567, with the splendid imprint " *Venetiis, in ædibus Manutianis*," and lastly a " Diogenes Laertius," printed at Lyons in 1644, in which were the famous various readings of the Va-

tican MS. 411, of the thirteenth century, and those of the two Venetian *codices* 393 and 394, so usefully consulted by Henri Estiennes, and all the passages in the Doric dialect, only to be found in the celebrated twelfth century MS. of the Naples library. M. Mabœuf never lit a fire in his room, and went to bed with the sun, in order not to burn a candle; it seemed as if he no longer had neighbours, for they shunned him when he went out, and he noticed it. The wretchedness of a child interests a mother, the wretchedness of a youth interests an old man, but the wretchedness of an old man interests nobody, and it is the coldest of all distresses.

Every evening, before going to bed, he had fallen into the habit of reading a few pages of his Diogenes Laertius; for he knew enough of Greek to enjoy the peculiarities of the text which he possessed, and had no other joy now left him. A few weeks passed away, and all at once Mother Plutarch fell ill. There is one thing even more sad than having no money to buy bread at a baker's, and that is, not to have money to buy medicine at the chemist's. One night the doctor had ordered a most expensive potion, and then the disease grew worse, and a nurse was necessary. M. Mabœuf opened his book-case, but there was now nothing left in it; the last volume had departed, and the only thing left him was the Diogenes Laertius. He placed the unique copy under his arm and went out—it was June 4, 1832; he proceeded to Royol's successor at the Porte St. Jacques, and returned with one hundred francs. He placed the pile of five-franc pieces on the old servant's table, and entered his bed-room without uttering a syllable. At dawn of the next day he seated himself on the overturned post in his garden, and over the hedge he might have been seen the whole morning, motionless, with drooping head, and eyes vaguely fixed on the faded flower-beds. It rained every now and then, but the old man did not seem to notice it: but in the afternoon extraordinary noises broke out in Paris, resembling musket-shots, and the clamour of a multitude. Father Mabœuf raised his head, noticed a gardener passing, and said,—

"What is the matter?"

The gardener replied, with the spade on his back, and with the most peaceful accent,—

"It's the rebels, they are fighting."

"In what direction?"

"Over by the arsenal."

Father Mabœuf went into his house, took his hat, mechanically sought for a book to place under his arm, found none, said, "Ah, it is true!" and went out with a wandering look.

CHAPTER XX

THE facts which we are going to record belong to that dramatic and living reality which the historian sometimes neglects through want of time and space, but they contain, we insist upon it, life, palpitation, and human quivering. Small details, apparently unimportant, are, so to speak, the foliage of great events, and are lost in the distance of history. The period called the riots abounds in details of this nature, and the judicial inquiries, through other than historic reasons, have not revealed everything, or perhaps studied it. We are, therefore, going to bring into light among the peculiarities known and published, things which are not known, and facts over which the forgetfulness of some and the death of others have passed. Most of the actors in these gigantic scenes have disappeared. On the next day they held their tongues, but we may say that we saw what we are about to narrate. We will change a few names, for history recounts, and does not denounce, but we will depict true things. The nature of our book will only allow us to display one side and one episode, assuredly the least known, of the days of June 5 and 6, 1832, but we will do so in such a way that the reader will be enabled to catch a glimpse of the real face of this frightful public adventure behind the dark veil which we are about to lift.

In the spring of 1832, although for three months cholera had chilled minds and cast over their agitation a species of dull calm, Paris had been for a long time ready for a commotion. The great city may be compared to a piece of artillery when it is loaded,—a spark need only fall and the gun goes off. In June, 1832, the spark was the death of General Lamarque. Lamarque was a man of renown and of action, and had displayed in succession, under the Empire and the Restoration, the two braveries necessary for the two epochs, the bravery of the battlefield and the bravery of the oratorical tribune. He was eloquent as he had been valiant, and a sword was felt in his words;

like Foy, his predecessor, after holding the command erect, he held liberty erect; he sat between the Left and the Extreme Left beloved by the people because he accepted the chances of the future, and beloved by the mob because he had served the Emperor well. He was with Gérard and Drouet one of Napoleon's marshals *in petto*, and the hiatus of 1815 affected him like a personal insult. He hated Wellington with a direct hatred, which pleased the multitude, and for the last seventeen years, scarcely paying attention to intermediate events, he had majestically nursed his grief for Waterloo. In his dying hour he pressed to his heart a sword which the officers of the Hundred Days had given him, and while Napoleon died uttering the word *army*, Lamarque died pronouncing the word *country*. His death, which was expected, was feared by the people as a loss, and by the Government as an opportunity. This death was a mourning, and, like everything which is better, mourning may turn into revolt. This really happened on the previous evening, and on the morning of June 5th, the day fixed for the interment of Lamarque, the Faubourg St. Antoine, close to which the procession would pass, assumed a formidable aspect. This tumultuous network of streets was filled with rumours, and people armed themselves as they could. Carpenters carried off the bolts of their shop "to break in doors with;" one of them made a dagger of a stocking-weaver's hook, by breaking off the hook and sharpening the stump. Another in his fever "to attack" slept for three nights in his clothes. A carpenter of the name of Lombier met a mate, who asked him, "Where are you going?" "Why, I have no weapon, and so I am going to my shop to fetch my compasses." "What to do?" "I don't know," Lombier said. A porter of the name of Jacqueline arrested any workman who happened to pass, and said, "Come with me." He paid for a pint of wine, and asked, "Have you work?" "No." "Go to Filspierre's, between the Montreuil and Charonne barriéres, and you will find work. At Filspierre's cartridges and arms were distributed, Some well-known chiefs went the rounds, that is to say, ran from one to the other to collect their followers. At Barthelemy's near the Barriére du Trone, and at Capel's, the Petit Chateau, the drinkers accosted each other with a serious air, and could be heard saying, "Where is your pistol?" "Under my blouse; and yours?" "Under my shirt." In the Rue Traversière,

in front of Roland's workshop, and in the yard of the Burnt House, before the workshop of Bernier the toolmaker, groups stood whispering. The most ardent among them was a certain Mavot, who never stopped longer than a week at a shop, for his masters sent him away, "as they were obliged to quarrel with him every day." Mavot was killed the next day on the barricade of the Rue Menilmontant. Pretot, who was also destined to die in the struggle, seconded Mavot, and replied to the question "What is your object?" "Insurrection." Workmen assembled at the corner of the Rue de Berry, awaiting a man of the name of Lemarin, revolutionary agent for the Faubourg St. Marceau, and pass-words were exchanged almost publicly.

On June 5, then, a day of sunshine and shower, the funeral procession of General Lamarque passed through Paris with the official military pomp, somewhat increased by precautions. Two battalions with covered drums and trailing muskets, ten thousand of the National Guard with their sabres at their side, and the batteries of the artillery of the National Guard, escorted the coffin, and the hearse was drawn by young men. The officers of the Invalides followed immediately after, bearing laurel branches, and then came a countless, agitated, and strange multitude, the sectionists of the friends of the people, the school of law, the school of medicine, refugees of all nations, Spanish, Italian, German, Polish flags, horizontal tri-colour flags, every banner possible, children waving green branches, stone-cutters and carpenters, out of work at this very time, and printers, easy to recognize by their paper caps, marching two and two, three and three, uttering cries, nearly all shaking sticks, and some sabres, without order, but with one soul, at one moment a mob, at another a column. Squads selected their chiefs, and a man armed with a brace of pistols, which were perfectly visible, seemed to pass others in review, whose files made way for him. On the side-walks of the boulevards, on the branches of the trees, in the balconies, at the windows and on the roofs, there was a dense throng of men, women and children, whose eyes were full of anxiety. An armed crowd passed, and a startled crowd looked at it; on its side Government was observing, with its hand on the sword-hilt. Four squadrons of carbineers, mounted, and with their trumpeters at the head, with their cartouche boxes full, and

their musquetoons loaded, might be seen on the Place Louis XV., in the Pays Latin, and at the Jardin des Plantes; the municipal guard were echelonned from street to street; at the Halle-aux-Vins was a squadron of dragoons, at the Grève was one half of the twelfth Light Infantry, while the other half was at the Bastille; the 6th Dragoons were at the Celestins, and the court of the Louvre was crammed with artillery; all the rest of the troops were confined to barracks, without counting the regiments in the environs of Paris. The alarmed authorities held suspended over the threatening multitude twenty-four thousand soldiers in the city, and thirty thousand in the suburbs.

Various rumours circulated in the procession, legitimist intrigues were talked about, and they spoke about the Duke of Reichstadt, whom GOD was marking for death at the very moment when the crowd designated him for Emperor. A person who was never discovered announced that at an appointed hour two overseers, gained over, would open to the people the gates of a small arm factory. An enthusiasm blended with despondency was visible in the uncovered heads of most of the persons present, and here and there too in this multitude, suffering from so many violent but noble emotions, might be seen criminal faces and ignoble lips that muttered, "Let us plunder." There are some agitations which stir up the bottom of the marsh and bring clouds of mud to the surface of the water; this is a phenomenon familiar to a well-constituted police force. The procession proceeded with feverish slowness from the house of death along the boulevards to the Bastille. It rained at intervals, but the rain produced no effect on this crowd. Several incidents, such as the coffin carried thrice round the Vendome column, stones thrown at the Duc de Fitzjames, who was noticed in a balcony with his hat on his head, the Gallic cock torn from a popular flag and dragged in the mud, a policeman wounded by a sword-thrust at the Porte St. Martin, an officer of the 12th Light Infantry saying aloud, "I am a republican," the Polytechnic school coming up, after forcing the gates, and the cries of "Long live the Polytechnic school!" "Long live the Republic!" marked the passage of the procession. At the Bastille long formidable files of spectators, coming down from the Faubourg St. Antoine, effected their junction with the procession, and a certain terrible ebullition

began to agitate the crowd. A man was heard saying to another, "You see that fellow with the red beard; he will say when it is time to fire. It seems that this red beard reappeared with the same functions in a later riot, the Quenisset affair.

The hearse passed the Bastille, followed the canal, crossed the small bridge, and reached the esplanade of the Bridge of Austerlitz, where it halted. At this moment a bird's-eye view of the crowd would have offered the appearance of a comet, whose head was on the esplanade, and whose tail was prolonged upon the boulevard as far as the Porte St. Martin. A circle was formed round the hearse, and the vast crowd was hushed. Lafayette spoke, and bade farewell to Lamarque: it was a touching and august moment,—all heads were uncovered, and all hearts beat. All at once a man on horseback, dressed in black, appeared in the middle of the group with a red flag, though others say with a pike surmounted by a red cap. Lafayette turned his head away, and Excelmans left the procession. This red flag aroused a storm and disappeared in it: from the Boulevard Bourdon to the Bridge of Austerlitz one of those clamours which resemble billows, stirred up the multitude, and two prodigious cries were raised, "*Lamarque at the Pantheon!*"—"*Lafayette at the Hôtel de Ville!*" Young men, amid the acclamations of the crowd, began dragging Lamarque in the hearse over the Bridge of Austerlitz, and Lafayette in a hackney coach along the Quai Morland. In the crowd that surrounded and applauded Lafayette people noticed and pointed out to each other a German by the name of Ludwig Snyder, who has since died a centenarian, who also went through the campaign of 1776, and had fought at Trenton under Washington, and under Lafayette at Brandywine.

The municipal cavalry galloped along the left bank to stop the passage of the bridge, while on the right the dragoons came out of the Celestins and deployed along the Quai Morland. The people who were drawing Lafayette suddenly perceived them at a turning of the quay, and cried, "The Dragoons!" The troops advanced at a walk, silently, with the pistols in the holsters, sabres undrawn, and muzquetoons slung with an air of gloomy expectation. Two hundred yards from the little bridge they halted, the coach in which Lafayette was went up to them, they opened their ranks to let it

pass, and then closed up again. At this moment the dragoons and the crowd came in contact, and women fled in terror. What took place in this fatal minute? No one could say, for it is the dark moment when two clouds clash together. Some state that a bugle-call sounding the charge was heard on the side of the Arsenal, others that a dragoon was stabbed with a knife by a lad. The truth is, that three shots were suddenly fired, one killing Major Cholut, the second an old deaf woman who was closing her window in the Rue Contrescarpe, while the third grazed an officer's shoulder. A woman cried, "They have begun too soon!" and all at once a squadron of dragoons was seen galloping up on the opposite side with drawn sabres, and sweeping everything before it. At such a moment, the last word is said, the tempest is unchained, stones shower, the fusillade bursts forth: many rush to the water's edge and cross the small arm of the Seine, which is now filled up: the timber-yards on Isle Louviers, that ready-made citadel, bristle with combatants, stakes are pulled up, pistols are fired, a barricade is commenced, the young men, driven back, pass over the Bridge of Austerlitz with the hearse at the double, and charge the municipal guard: the carbineers gallop up, the dragoons sabre, the crowd disperses in all directions, a rumour of war flies to the four corners of Paris: men cry "To arms," and run, overthrow, fly, and resist. Passion spreads the riot as the wind does fire.

Nothing is more extraordinary than the commencement of a riot, for everything breaks out everywhere at once. Was it foreseen? Yes. Was it prepared? No. Where does it issue from? From the pavement. Where does it fall from? The clouds. At one spot the insurrection has the character of a plot, at another of an improvisation. The first comer grasps a current of the mob, and leads it whither he pleases. It is a beginning full of horror, with which a sort of formidable gaiety is mingled. First there is a clamour; shops are closed and the goods disappear from the tradesmen's windows; then dropping shots are heard; people fly; gate-ways are assailed with the butts of muskets, and servant-maids may be heard laughing in the yards of the houses and saying, *There's going to be a row.*

A quarter of an hour had not elapsed: this is what was going on simultaneously at twenty different points of Paris.

In the Rue St. Croix de la Bretonnerie, twenty young men, with beards and long hair entered a wine-shop and came out a moment after carrying a horizontal tricolour flag covered with crape, and having at their head three men armed, one with a sabre, the second with a gun, and the third with a pike. In the Rue des Nonaindières, a well-dressed bourgeois, who had a large stomach, a sonorous voice, bald head, lofty forehead, black beard, and one of those rough moustaches which cannot be kept from bristling, publicly offered cartridges to passers-by. In the Rue St. Pierre Montmartre bare-armed men carried about a black flag, on which were read these words, in white letters: *Republic or Death.* In the Rue des Jeûneurs, Rue du Cadran, Rue Montorgueil, and Rue Mandar, groups appeared waving flags, on which could be distinguished the word *Section* in gold letters with a number. One of these flags was red and blue, with an imperceptible parting line of white. A small arm-factory and the gunsmiths' shops were plundered on the Boulevard St. Martin, and in a few minutes the thousand hands of the mob seized and carried off two hundred and thirty guns, nearly all double-barrelled, sixty-four sabres, and eighty-three pistols. In order to arm as many persons as possible, one took the musket, the other the bayonet. Opposite the Quai de la Gréve young men armed with muskets stationed themselves in the rooms of some ladies in order to fire; one of them had a wheel-lock gun. They rang, went in and began making cartridges, and one of the ladies said afterwards, "I did not know what cartridges were till my husband told me." A crowd broke into a curiosity-shop on the Rue des Vieilles-Haudriettes, and took from it yataghans and Turkish weapons. The corpse of a mason killed by a bullet lay in the Rue de la Perle. And then, on the right bank and the left bank, on the quay, on the boulevards, in the Quartier Latin, and on the Quartier of the Halles, panting men, workmen, students, and sectionists read proclamations, shouted "To arms!" broke the lanterns, unharnessed vehicles, tore up the pavement, broke in the doors of houses, unrooted trees, searched cellars, rolled up barrels, heaped up paving-stones, furniture, and planks, and formed barricades.

In less than an hour twenty-seven barricades issued from the ground in the single quarter of the Halles; in the centre

was that famous house, No. 50, which was the fortress of Jeanne and her hundred-and-six companions, and which, flanked on one side by a barricade at St. Merry, and on the other by a barricade in the Rue Maubuée commanded by three streets, des Arcis, St. Martin, and Aubry le Boucher, the last of which it faced. This is without counting innumerable barricades in twenty other districts of Paris, as the Marias and the Montagne Ste Geneviève; one in the Rue Menilmontant, in which a gate could be seen torn off its hinges; and another near the little bridge of the Hôtel Dieu, made of an overthrown vehicle.

At the moment when the insurrection, breaking out through the collision between the people and the troops in front of the arsenal, produced a retrograde movement in the multitude that followed the hearse, and which pressed with the whole length of the boulevards upon the head of the procession, there was a frightful reflux. The ranks were broken, and all ran or escaped, some with cries of attack, others with the pallor of flight, the great stream which covered the boulevards divided in a second, overflowed on the right and left, and spread in torrents over two hundred streets at once, as if a dyke had burst. At this moment a ragged lad who was coming down the Rue Menilmontant, holding in his hand a branch of flowering laburnum which he had picked on the heights of Belleville, noticed in the shop of a seller of curiosities an old holster pistol. He threw his branch on the pavement, and cried,—

"Mother What's-your-name, I'll borrow your machine."

And he ran off with the pistol. Two minutes after, a crowd of frightened cits flying through the Rue Basse met the lad, who was brandishing his pistol and singing—

La nuit on ne voit rien,
Le jour on voit très bien,
D'un écrit apocryphe
Le bourgeois s'ébouriffe
Pratiquez la vertu
Tutu chapeau pointu!

—It was little Gavroche going to the wars. Gavroche did not suspect, that on that wretched rainy night when he offered the hospitality of his elephant to the two boys he was performing the offices of Providence to his two brothers. His brothers in the evening, his father in the morning,—such had

been his night. On leaving the Rue des Ballets at dawn, he hurried back to the elephant, artistically extracted the two boys, shared with them the sort of breakfast which he had invented, and then went away, confiding them to that good mother, the street, who had almost brought himself up. On leaving them he gave them the meeting on the same spot at night and left them this speech as farewell,—"I am breaking a cane, *alias* my name's walker, or, as they say at Court, I am going to hook it. My brats, if you do not find papa and mamma, come here again to-night. I will give you your supper, and put you to bed." The two lads picked up by some policeman and placed at the depôt, or stolen by some mountebank, or simply lost in that Chinese puzzle, Paris, did not return. The substrata of the existing social world are full of such lost races. Gavroche had not seen them again, and ten or twelve weeks had elapsed since that night. More than once he had scratched his head and asked himself, "Where the deuce are my two children?"

Gavroche effected his junction with a band led by Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Combeferre, and Feuilly. They were all more or less armed. Bahorel and Prouvaire, two of their associates, had joined them. Enjolras had a double-barrelled fowling-piece, Combeferre a National Guard's musket bearing the number of a legion, and in his waist-belt two pistols, which his unbuttoned coat allowed to be seen; Jean Prouvaire an old cavalry musquetoon, and Bahorel a carbine; Courfeyrac brandished a sword drawn from a cane, while Feuilly, with a naked sabre in his hand, walked along shouting, "Long live Poland!" They reached the Quai Morland without neckcloths or hats, panting for breath, drenched with rain, but with lightning in their eyes. Gavroche calmly approached them,—

"Where are we going?"

"Come," said Courfeyrac.

A tumultuous crowd accompanied them—students, artists, young men affiliated to the Cougourde of Aix, artisans, and lightermen, armed with sticks and bayonets, and some, like Combeferre, with pistols passed through their trouser-belt. An old man, who appeared very aged, marched in this band; he had no weapon, and hurried on, that he might not be left behind, though he looked thoughtful. It was M. Mabœuf

We will tell what had occurred. Enjolras and his friends were on the Bourdon Boulevard near the granaries, at the moment when the dragoons charged, and Enjolras, Courfeyrac, and Combeferre were among those who turned into the Rue Bassompierre shouting "To the barricades!" In the Rue Lesdiguières they met an old man walking along, and what attracted their attention was that he was moving very irregularly, as if intoxicated. Moreover, he had his hat in his hand, although it had rained the whole morning, and was raining rather hard at that very moment. Courfeyrac recognized Father Mabœuf, whom he knew through having accompanied Marius sometimes as far as his door. Knowing the peaceful and more than timid habits of the churchwarden and bibliomaniac, and stupefied at seeing him in the midst of the tumult, within two yards of cavalry charges, almost in the midst of the musketry fire, bareheaded in the rain, walking about among bullets, he accosted him, and the rebel of five-and-twenty and the octogenarian exchanged this dialogue.

"Monsieur Mabœuf, you had better go home. There is going to be a row. Sabre-cuts and shots, M. Mabœuf."

"Very good."

"Cannon-shots."

"Very good. Where are you gentlemen going?"

"To upset the Government."

"Very good."

And he began following them, but since that moment had not said a word. His step had become suddenly firm, and when workmen offered him an arm, he declined it with a shake of the head. He walked almost at the head of the column, having at once the command of a man who is marching and the face of a man who is asleep.

"What a determined old fellow!" the students muttered, and the rumour ran along the party that he was an ex-conventionalist, an old regicide.

The Parisians who at the present day, on entering the Rue Rambuteau from the side of the Halles, notice, on their right, opposite the Rue Mondétour, a basket-maker's shop having for sign a basket in the shape of Napoleon the Great, with this inscription:

NAPOLÉON EST FAIT
TOUT EN OSIER,—

do not suspect the terrible scenes which this very site saw hardly thirty years ago. Here were the Rue de la Chanvrerie, which old title-deeds write Chanverrerie, and the celebrated wine-shop called Corinth. A barricade of very formidable dimensions was erected by the rioters at this spot, eclipsed, by the way, by the St. Merry barricade. It is on this famous barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, which has now fallen into deep night, that we are going to throw a little light.

Those persons who wish to represent to themselves in a tolerably exact manner the mass of houses which at that day stood at the north-east corner of the Halles, at the spot where the opening of the Rue Rambuteau now is, need only imagine an N whose two vertical strokes are the Rue de la Grande Truanderie, and the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and of which the Rue de la Petite Truanderie would be the cross-stroke. The old Rue Mondétour intersected the three strokes with the most tortuous angles, so that the Dædalian entanglement of these four streets was sufficient to make, upon a space of one hundred square yards, between the Halles and the Rue St. Denis on one side, between the Rue du Cygne and the Rue des Prêcheurs, on the other side, seven islets of houses, strangely cut, of different heights, standing side-ways, and as if accidentally, and scarce separated by narrow cracks, like the blocks of stone in a dock. We say narrow cracks, and cannot give a fairer idea of these obscure, narrow, angular lanes, bordered by tenements eight storeys in height. These houses were so decrepit that in the Rues de la Chanvrerie and La Petite Truanderie, the frontages were supported by beams running across from one house to the other. The street was narrow and the gutter wide ; the passer-by walked on a constantly damp pavement, passing shops like cellars, heavy posts shod with iron, enormous piles of filth, the gates armed with extraordinary old palings. The Rue Rambuteau has devastated all this. The name of Mondétour exactly describes the winding of all this lay-stall. A little further on it was found even better expressed by the Rue Pirouette, which threw itself into the Rue Mondétour. The wayfarer who turned out of the Rue St. Denis into the Rue de la Chanvrerie saw it gradually contract before him, as if he had entered an elongated funnel. At the end of the street, which was very short, he found the passage barred on the side of the Halles by a tall row of houses, and he might have

fancied himself in a blind alley had he not perceived on his right and left two black cuts through which he could escape. It was the Rue Mondétour, which joined on one side the Rue des Prêcheurs, on the other the Rue du Cygne. At the end of this sort of blind alley, at the corner of the right-hand cutting, a house lower than the rest, forming a species of cape in the street, might be noticed. It is in this house, only two storeys high, that an illustrious cabaret had been installed for more than three hundred years. This inn produced a joyous noise at the very spot which old Theophile indicated in the two lines,—

> Là branle le squelette horrible,
> D'un pauvre amant qui se pendit.

The spot was good, and the landlord succeeded each other from father to son. In the time of Mathurin Régnier this inn was called the "Rose-pot," and as rebuses were fashionable, it had as sign a post painted pink, which represented a "pot-eau rose," hence the Pot-aux-roses. In the last century worthy Natoire, one of the fantastic masters disdained at the present day by the stiff school, having got tipsy several times in this inn at the same table where Régnier had got drunk, painted out of gratitude a bunch of currants on the pink post. The landlord, in his delight, changed his sign, and had the words gilt under the bunch, *au raisin de Corinthe*, hence the name of Corinth.

A ground-floor room in which was the bar, a first-floor room in which was a billiard-table, a spiral wooden staircase piercing the ceiling, wine on the tables, smoke on the walls, and candles by daylight—such was the inn. A staircase with a trap in the ground-floor room led to the cellar, and the apartments of the occupiers were on the second floor, reaching by a staircase more like a ladder, and through a door hidden in the wall of the large first-floor room. Under the roof were two garrets, the nests of the maid-servants, and the kitchen shared the ground-floor with the bar.

Father Hucheloup, the landlord, was a worthy fellow. He always looked ill-tempered, appeared wishful to intimidate his customers, growled at persons who came in, and seemed more disposed to quarrel with them than serve them. And yet we maintain people were always welcome. This peculiarity filled his bar, and brought to him young men who said, "Let us go and have a look at Father Hucheloup." He had been a

fencing-master, and would suddenly break out into a laugh ; he had a rough voice, but was a merry fellow. His was a comical foundation with a tragical look ; and he asked for nothing better than to frighten you, something like the snuff-boxes which had the shape of a pistol—the detonation produces a sneeze. He had for wife a Mother Hucheloup, a bearded and very ugly being. About 1830 Father Huchleloup died, and with him disappeared the secret of the *carpe au gras*. His widow, who was almost inconsolable, carried on the business, but the cooking degenerated, and became execrable, and the wine, which had always been bad, was frightful. Courfeyrac and his friends, however, frequented Corinth—through pity, said Bossuet.

Widow Hucheloup was short of breath and shapeless, and had rustic recollections, which she deprived of their insipidity by her pronunciation. She had a way of her own of saying things which seasoned her reminiscences of her village and the spring : it had formerly been her delight, she declared, to hear the red-beasts singing in the awe-thorns." The first-floor room, where the restaurant was, was a large, long apartment, crowded with stools, chairs, benches, and tables, and an old rickety billiard-table. It was reached by the spiral staircase which led to a square hole in the corner of the room, like a ship's hatchway. This apartment, lighted by only one narrow window and a constantly burning lamp, had a garret-look about it and all the four-legged articles of furniture behaved as if they had only three.

Two servant girls, called Matelotte and Gibelotte, and who were never known by other names, helped Mame Hucheloup in placing on the tables bottles of blue wine, and the various messes served out to the hungry guests in earthenware bowls. Matelotte, stout, round, red-haired, and noisy, an ex-favourite sultana of the defunct Hucheloup, was uglier than the ugliest mythological monster ; and yet, as it is always proper that the servant should be a little behind the mistress, she was not so ugly as Mame Hucheloup. Gibelotte, tall, delicate, white with a lympathic whiteness, with blue circles round her eyes, and drooping lids, ever exhausted and oppressed, and suffering from what may be called chronic lassitude, the first to rise, the last to go to bed, waited on everybody, even the other servant, silently and gently, and smiling a sort of vague, sleepy

smile through her weariness. Before entering the restaurant the following line written by Courfeyrac in chalk was legible,—

"Régale si tu peux, et mange si tu l'oses."

On the morning of June 5th, Bossuet and Joly, who were breakfasting at Corinth, were unexpectedly disturbed by a tumult of hurried footsteps, and shouts of *To arms!* He turned, and noticed in the Rue. St Denis at the end of the Rue Chanvrerie, Enjolras passing, carbine in hand, Gavroche with his pistol, Feuilly with his sabre, Courfeyrac with his sword, Jean Prouvaire with his musquetoon, Combeferre with his fowling-piece, Bahorel with his, and the whole armed and stormy band that followed them. The Rue de la Chanvrerie was not a pistol-shot in length, so Bossuet improvised a speaking-trumpet with his two hands round his mouth, and shouted,—

"Courfeyrac! Courfeyrac! hilloh!"

Courfeyrac heard the summons, perceived Bossuet, and walked a few steps down the Rue de la Chanvrerie exclaiming, "What do you want?" which was crossed by a "Where are you going?"

"To make a barricade," Courfeyrac answered.

"Well, why not make it here? The spot is good."

"That is true, Eagle," Courfeyrac remarked.

Enjolras, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac directing everything, two barricades were erected simultaneously, both of which were supported by Corinth and formed a square; the larger one closed the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and the smaller the Rue Mondétour on the side of the Rue du Cygne. This latter barricade, which was very narrow, was merely made of barrels and paving-stones. There were about fifty workmen there, of whom three were armed with guns, for on the road they had borrowed a gunsmiths's entire stock.

The journals of the day which stated that the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, that *almost impregnable fortress*, as they called it, reached the level of a first-floor, are mistaken, for the truth is, that it did not exceed an average height of six or seven feet. It was so built that the combatants could, at will, either disappear behind it or ascend to its crest, by means of a quadruple row of paving-stone arranged like steps inside. Externally the front of the barricade, composed of piles of paving-stones and barrels, held together by joists and

planks, passed through the wheels of a truck and an omnibus, had a bristling and inextricable appearance. A gap, sufficiently wide for one man to pass, was left between the house wall and the end of the barricade furthest from the wine-shop, so that a sortie was possible. The pole of the omnibus was held upright by ropes, and a red flag fixed to this pole floated over the barricade. The small Mondétour barricade, concealed behind a wine-shop, could not be seen, but the two barricades combined formed a real redoubt. Enjolras and Courfeyrac had not thought it advisable to barricade the other portion of the Rue Mondétour, which opens on to the Halles, as they doubtless wished to maintain a possible communication with the outside and had but little fear of being attacked by the difficult and dangerous Rue des Prêcheurs. With the exception of this issue left free, which constituted what Folard would have called, in a strategic style, a zigzag, and of the narrow passage in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the interior of the barricade in which the wine-shop formed a salient angle, presented an irregular quadrilateral, enclosed on all sides. There was a space of twenty yards between the great barricade and the tall houses which formed the end of the street, so that it might be said that the barricade leant against these houses, which were all inhabited, but closed from top to bottom.

All this labour was completed without any obstacle, in less than an hour, during which this handful of men had not seen a single bearskin-cap or bayonet. The few citizens who still venturing at this moment of riot into the Rue St. Denis took a glance into the Rue de la Chanvrerie, perceived the barricade, and doubled their pace. When the two barricades were completed and the flag was hoisted, a table was pulled from the wine-shop into the street, and Courfeyrac got upon it. Enjolras brought up a square chest, which Courfeyrac opened, and it proved to be full of cartridges. When they saw these cartridges the bravest trembled, and there was a moment's silence. Courfeyrac distributed the cartridges smilingly, and each received thirty: many had powder, and began making others with bullets which had been cast on the spot; they also had a powder barrel, on a separate table, near the door, which was held in reserve. The assembly, which was traversing the whole of Paris, did not cease, but in the end

it had become a monotonous sound, to which they no longer paid any attention. This noise at one moment retired, at another came nearer, with lugubrious undulations. The guns and carbines were loaded all together, without precipitation and with a solemn gravity. Enjolras then stationed three sentries outside the barricades, one in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the second in the Rue des Prêcheurs, the third at the corner of the Petite Truanderie. Then, when the barricades were built, the posts assigned, the guns loaded, the sentries set, the insurgents alone in these formidable streets, through which no one now passed, surrounded by dumb and, as it were, dead houses, in which no human movement palpitated, enveloped in the menacing darkness, in the midst of that silence and obscurity in which they felt something advancing, and which had something tragical and terrifying about it, isolated, armed, determined, and tranquil—they waited.

Night set in, and nothing had yet occurred, only confused rumours and fusillades now and then could be heard, but they were rare, badly maintained, and distant. This respite, which was prolonged, was a sign that the Government was taking its time and collecting its strength. These fifty men were waiting for the coming of sixty thousand. Enjolras was attacked by that impatience which seizes on powerful minds when they stond on the threshold of formidable events. He looked up Gavroche, who was busy manufacturing cartridges in the ground-floor room by the dubious light of two candles placed on the bar for precaution, on account of the gunpowder sprinkled over the tables. These two candles threw no rays outside, and the insurgents allowed no light in the upper floors. Gavroche was at this moment greatly occupied, though not precisely with his cartridge.

A recruit who had joined them at the Rue des Billettes had come into the room and seated himself at the least-lighted table. A Brown Bess of the large model had fallen to his share, and he held it between his legs. Gavroche up to this moment, distracted by a hundred "amusing" things, had not even seen this man. When he entered Gavroche looked after him, mechanically admiring his musket, but when the man was seated the gamin suddenly rose. Those who might have watched this man would have noticed him observe everything in the barricade, and the band of insurgents, with singular,

attention, but when he entered the room he fell into a state of contemplation, and seemed to see nothing of what was going on. The gamin approached this pensive man, and began walking round him on tip-toe, in the same way as people move round a man whom they are afraid of awaking. At the same time all the grimaces of an old man passed over his childish face, at once so impudent and so serious, so giddy and so profound, so gay and so affecting, and these grimaces signified, "Oh stuff! it is not possible, I must see double—I am dreaming—can it be?—no, it is not—yes, it is—no, it is not." Gavroche balanced himself on his heels, clenched his fists in his pockets, moved his neck like a bird, and expended on an enormously outstretched lip all the sagacity of a lower lip. He was stupefied, uncertain, convinced, and dazzled. He looked like the chief of the eunuchs at the slave-market discovering a Venus among the girls, and the air of an amateur recognizing a Raphael in a pile of daubs. All about him was at work, the instinct that scents and the intellect that combines; it was plain that an event was happening to Gavroche. It was when he was deepest in thought that Enjolras accosted him.

"You are little," he said, "and will not be seen. Go out of the barricades, slip along the houses, pass through as many streets as you can, and come back to tell me what is going on."

Gavroche drew himself up.

"So little ones are good for something! that's lucky! I'm off. In the meanwhile, trust to the little, and distrust the big," and Gavroche, raising his head and dropping his voice, added, as he pointed to the man of the Rue des Billettes,—

"You see that tall fellow?"

"Well?"

"He's a spy."

"Are you sure?"

"Not a fortnight back he pulled me down by the ear from the cornice of the Pont Royal where I was taking the air."

Enjolras hurriedly left the gamin, and whispered a few words to a labourer from the wine-docks who was present. The labourer went out and returned almost immediately, followed by three others. The four men, four broad-shouldered porters, stationed themselves silently behind the table at which the man was seated, in evident readiness to fall upon him, and then Enjolras walked up to the man and asked him,—

"Who are you?"

At this sudden question the man started, he looked into the depths of Enjolras' candid eyeballs, and seemed to read his thoughts. He gave a smile, which was at once the most disdainful, energetic, and resolute possible, and answered, with a haughty gravity,—

"I see what you mean,—well, yes!"

"Are you a spy?"

"I am an agent of the authority!"

"And your name is—?"

"Javert."

Enjolras gave the four men a sign, and in a twinkling, before Javert had time to turn round, he was collared, thrown down, bound and searched. They found on him a small round card fixed between two pieces of glass, and bearing on one side the arms of France, with the motto, "Surveillance and vigilance," and on the other this notice, "JAVERT, police Inspector, fifty-two years of age," and the signature of the Prefect of Police of that day, M. Gisquet. He had also a watch and a purse containing some pieces of gold, and both were left him. Behind his watch, at the bottom of his fob, a paper was found, which Enjolras unfolded, and on which he read these lines, written by the Prefect of Police himself,—

"So soon as his political mission is concluded, Javert will assure himself by a special watch whether it is true that criminals assemble on the slope of the right bank of the Seine near the Bridge of Jena."

When the search was ended Javert was raised from the ground, his arms were tied behind his back, and he was fastened in the middle of the room to the celebrated post which in olden times gave its name to the wine-shop. Gavroche, who had watched the whole scene, and approved of everything with a silent shake of the head, went up to Javert, and said,—

"The mouse has trapped the cat."

All this took place so quickly that it was completed before those outside the wine-shop were aware of it. Javert had not uttered a cry, but, on seeing him fastened to the post, Courfeyrac, Bossuet, Combeferre, Joly, and the men scattered over the two barricades, flocked in. Javert, who was surrounded with cords so that he could not stir, raised

his head with the intrepid serenity of a man who has never told a falsehood.

The tragical picture we have undertaken would not be complete, the reader would not see in their exact and real relief those great moments of social lying-in and revolutionary giving birth, in which there are throes blended with effort, if we were to omit in our sketch an incident full of an epic and stern horror, which occurred almost immediately after Gavroche's departure.

Bands of rioters, it is well known, resemble a snowball, and, as they roll along, agglomerate many tumultuous men, who do not ask each other whence they come. Among the passers-by who joined the band led by Enjolras, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac, there was a man wearing a porter's jacket, much worn at the shoulders, who gesticulated and vociferated, and had the appearance of a drunken savage. This man, whose name or nickname was Le Cabuc, and entirely unknown to those who pretended to know him, was seated in a state of real or feigned intoxication, with four others, round a table which they had dragged out of the wine-shop. This Cabuc, while making the others drink, seemed to be gazing thoughtfully at the large house behind the barricade, whose five storeys commanded the whole street, and faced the Rue St. Denis. All at once he exclaimed,—

"Do you know what, comrades, we must fire from that house. When we are at the windows, hang me if any one can come up the street."

"Yes, but the house is closed," said one of the drinkers.

"We'll knock."

"They won't open."

"Then we'll break in the door."

Le Cabuc ran up to the door, which had a very massive knocker, and rapped; as the door was not opened he rapped again, and no one answering, he gave a third rap, but the silence continued.

"Is there any one in here?" Le Cabuc shouted. But nothing stirred, and so he seized a musket and began hammering the door with the butt end. It was an old, low, narrow, solid door, made of oak, lined with sheet iron inside and a heavy bar, and a thorough postern gate. The blows made the whole house tremble, but did not shake the door. The

inhabitants, however, were probably alarmed, for a little square trap window was at length lit up and opened on the third storey, and a candle and the grey-haired head of a terrified old man, who was the porter, appeared in the orifice, The man who was knocking left off.

"What do you want, gentlemen?" the porter asked.

"Open the door!" said Le Cabuc.

"I cannot, gentlemen."

"Open, I tell you!"

"It is impossible, gentlemen."

Le Cabuc raised his musket and took aim at the porter, but as he was below, and it was very dark, the porter did not notice the fact.

"Will you open? yes or no."

"No, gentlemen."

"You really mean it?"

"I say no, my kind——"

The porter did not finish the sentence, for the musket was fired; the bullet entered under his chin and came out of his neck, after passing through the jugular vein. The old man fell in a heap, without heaving a sigh, the candle went out, and nothing was visible save a motionless head lying on the sill of the window, and a small wreath of smoke ascending to the roof.

"There," said Le Cabuc, as he let the butt of the musket fall on the pavement again.

He had scarce uttered the word ere he felt a hand laid on his shoulder with the tenacity of an eagle's talon, and he heard a voice saying to him,—

"On your knees!"

The murderer turned, and saw before him Enjolras' white, cold face. Enjolras held a pistol in his hand, and had hurried up on hearing the shot fired, and clutched with his left hand Le Cabuc's blouse, shirt, and braces.

"On your knees," he repeated.

And with a sovereign movement the frail young man of twenty bent like a reed the muscular and robust porter, and forced him to kneel in the mud. Le Cabuc tried to resist, but he seemed to have been seized by a superhuman hand. Enjolras, pale, bare-neck, with his dishevelled hair and feminine face, had at this moment I know not what of the

ancient Themis. His dilated nostrils, his downcast eyes, gave to his implacable Greek profile that expression of wrath and that expression of chastity which, in the opinion of the old world, are becoming to justice. All the insurgents had hurried up, and then ranged themselves in a circle at a distance, feeling that it was impossible for them to utter a word in the presence of what they were going to see. Le Cabuc conquered, no longer attempted to struggle, and trembled all over: Enjolras loosed his grasp, and took out his watch.

"Pray or think!" he said, "you have one minute to do so."

"Mercy!" the murderer stammered, then hung his head and muttered a few inarticulate execrations.

Enjolras did not take his eyes off the watch; he let the minute pass, and then put the watch again in his fob. This done, he seized Le Cabuc by the hair, who clung to his knees with a yell, and placed the muzzle of the pistol to his ear. Many of these intrepid men, who had so tranquilly entered upon the most frightful of adventures turned away their heads. The explosion was heard, the assassin fell on his head on the pavement, and Enjolras drew himself up, and looked round him with a stern air of conviction. Then he kicked the corpse and said,—

"Throw this outside."

Enjolras, silent and collected, his virgin lips closed, stood for some time at the spot where he had shed blood, in the motionlessness of a marble statue. His fixed eye caused people to talk in whispers around him. Jean Prouvaire and Combeferre shook their heads silently, and leaning against each other in an angle of the barricade, gazed, with an admiration in which there was compassion, at this grave young man who was an executioner and priest, and had at the same time the light and the hardness of crystal. Let us say at once, that after the action, when the corpses were conveyed to the Morgue and searched, a police-agent's card was found on Le Cabuc; the author of this work had in his hands in 1848 the special report on this subject made to the Prefect of Police in 1832. Let us add that if we may believe a strange but probably well-founded police tradition, Le Cabuc was Claquesous. It is certainly true that, after the death of Cabuc, Claquesous was never heard of again, and left no trace of his disappearance. He seemed to have become amalgamated

with the invisible; his life had been gloom, and his end was night. The whole insurgent band were still suffering from the emotion of this tragical trial, so quickly begun and so quickly ended, when Courfeyrac saw again at the barricade a short young man who had come to his lodgings to ask for Marius; and who, though he had a bold and reckless look, had also something feminine in his appearance.

Marius, too, was with the insurgents. The voice which through the twilight had summoned him to the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrerie had produced on him the effect of the voice of destiny. He wished to die, and the opportunity offered; he rapped at the door of the tomb, and a hand held out the key to him from the shadows. Such gloomy openings in the darkness just in front of despair are tempting; Marius removed the bar which had so often allowed him to pass, left the garden, and said, "I will go." He began walking rapidly, and he happened to be armed, as he had Javert's pistols in his pocket. The young man whom he fancied that he had seen had got out of his sight in the streets.

Marius entered the Rue St. Honoré by the passage Delorme. The shops were closed there, the tradesmen were conversing before their open doors, people walked along, the lamps were lighted, and from the first-floor upwards the houses were illumined as usual. Cavalry were stationed on the square of the Palais Royal. Marius followed the Rue St. Honoré, and the further he got from the Palais Royal the fewer windows were lit up, the street grew darker, and at the same time the crowd denser, for the passers-by had now become a crowd. Near the Arbre Sec Fountain sombre groups were standing among the comers and goers like stones in the middle of a running stream. At the entrance of the Rue des Prouvaires, the crowd no longer moved, it was a solid, almost impenetrable mob of persons packed together and conversing in a low voice. There were hardly any black coats or round hats present, only fustian jackets, blouses, caps, and bristling beards. Beyond this dense crowd there was not a window lit up in the surrounding streets, and the solitary and decreasing rows of lanterns could only be seen in them. The street-lanterns of that day resembled large red stars suspended from ropes, and cast on to the pavement a shadow which had the shape of a large spider. These streets,

however, were not deserted, and piled muskets, moving bayonets, and troops bivouacking could be distinguished in them. No curious person went beyond this limit, and circulation ceased there; there the mob ended and the army began.

He made a circuit, came to the Rue de Béthisy, and proceeded in the direction of the Halles; at the corner of the Rue des Bourdonnais the lanterns ceased. After crossing the zone of the mob he passed the border of troops, and now found himself in something frightful. There was not a wayfarer, nor a soldier, nor light, nothing but solitude, silence, and night, and a strangely piercing cold; entering a street was something like entering a cellar. Still he continued to advance; some one ran close past him; was it a man? a woman? were there more than one? He could not have said, for it had passed and vanished. By constant circuits he reached a lane, which he judged to be the Rue de la Poterie, and towards the middle of that lane came across an obstacle. He stretched out his hands and found that it was an overturned cart, and his feet recognized pools of water, holes, scattered and piled-up paving stones—it was a barricade which had been begun and then abandoned. He clambered over the stones and soon found himself on the other side of the obstacle; he walked very close to the posts, and felt his way along the house walls.

Marius reached the Halles; there all was calmer, darker, and even more motionless than in the neighbouring streets. He reached the corner of that short piece of the Mondétour Lane which was, as will be remembered, the sole communication which Enjolras had maintained with the outer world. At the corner of the last house on his left, he stopped and peeped into the lane. A little beyond the dark corner formed by the lane and the Rue de la Chanvrerie, he noticed a little light on the pavement, a portion of a wine-shop, a lamp flickering in a sort of shapeless niche, and men crouching down with guns on their knees,—all this was scarce ten yards from him, and was the interior of a barricade. The houses that lined the right-hand side of the lane hid from him the rest of the wine-shop, the large barricade, and the flag. Marius had but one step to take, and then the unhappy young man sat down on a post, folded his arms, and thought of his father.

He thought of that heroic Colonel Pontmercy who had

left on all the victorious battle-fields of Europe drops of the same blood which Marius had in his veins; who had lived with his waist-belt buckled, his epaulettes falling on his chest, his cockade blackened by smoke, his brow wrinkled by his helmet, and who, at the expiration of twenty years had returned from the great wars with his scarred cheek and smiling face, having done everything for France, and nothing against her. He said to himself that his own day had now arrived, that he too was going to be brave, intrepid, and bold, to rush to meet bullets, offer his chest to the bayonets, shed his blood, seek the enemy. He saw civil war opening like a gulf before him, and that he was going to fall into it; then he shuddered.

He thought of his father's sword, which his grandfather had sold to the old clothes-dealer, and which he had so painfully regretted. He said to himself that this valiant and chaste sword had done well to escape from him, and disappear angrily in the darkness; that it fled away thus because it was intelligent, and foresaw the future,—the riots, the war of gutters, the war of paving-stones, fusillades from cellar-traps, and blows dealt and received from behind; that, coming from Marengo and Austerlitz, it was unwilling to go to the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and after what it had done with the father refused to do that with the son!

CHAPTER XXI

NOTHING had come yet: it had struck ten by St. Merry's, and Enjolras and Combeferre were sitting musket in hand near the sallyport of the great barricade. They did not speak, but were listening, trying to catch the dullest and most remote sound of marching. Suddenly, in the midst of this lugubrious calm, a clear, young, gay voice, which seemed to come from the Rue St. Denis, burst forth, and began singing distinctly, to the old popular tune of *Au clair de la lune*, these lines, terminating with a cry that resembled a cock-crow.

Mon nez est en larmes,
Mon ami Bugeaud,
Prêt'-moi tes gendarmes
Pour leur dire un mot.
En capote bleue,
Pa poule au shako,
Voici la banlieue!
Co-cocorico!

"'Tis Gavroche," said Enjolras.

"He is warning us," said Combeferre.

Hurried footsteps troubled the deserted streets, and a being more active than a clown was seen climbing over the omnibus, and Gavroche leaped into the square, out of breath and saying,—

"My gun! here they are."

An electric shudder ran along the whole barricade, and the movement of hands seeking guns was heard.

Some minutes more elapsed, and then a measured, heavy tramp of many feet was distinctly heard from the direction of St. Leu; this noise, at first faint, then precise, and then heavy and re-echoing, approached slowly without halt or interruption, and with a tranquil and terrible continuity. Nothing was audible but this; it was at once the silence and noise of the statue of the commendatore, but the stormy footfall and something enormous and multiple about it which aroused the idea of multitude at the same time as that of a spectre; you might have fancied that you heard the fearful statue Legion on the march. The tramp came nearer, nearer still, and then ceased; and the breathing of many men seemed to be audible at the end of the street. Nothing, however, was visible, though quite at the end in the thick gloom could be distinguished a multitude of metallic threads, fine as needles and almost imperceptible, which moved about like that indescribable phosphoric network which we perceive under our closed eyelids just at the moment when we are falling asleep. These were bayonets and musket barrels on which the reflection of the torch confusedly fell. There was another pause, as if both sides were waiting. All at one a voice which was the more sinister because no one could be seen, and it seemed as if the darkness itself was speaking, shouted,—

"Who goes there?"

At the same time the click of muskets being cocked could be heard. Enjolras replied with a sonorous and haughty accent,—

"The French Revolution!"

"Fire!" the voice commanded.

A flash lit up all the frontage in the street, as if the door of a furnace had been suddenly opened and shut, and a frightful shower of bullets hurled against the barricade, and the flag fell. The discharge had been so violent and dense that

it cut the staff asunder, that is to say, the extreme point of the omnibus pole. Bullets ricochetting from the corners of the houses, penetrated the barricade, and wounded several men. The impression produced by this first discharge was chilling; the attack was rude, and of a nature to make the boldest think. It was plain that they had to do with a whole regiment at the least.

M. Mabœuf was still with the insurgents; he had gone into the ground-floor room of the wine-shop and seated himself behind the bar, where he was, so to speak, annihilated in himself. He seemed no longer to see or think. Courfeyrac and others had twice or thrice accosted him, warning him of the peril, and begging him to withdraw, but he had not appeared to hear them. When no one was speaking to him his lips moved as if he were answering some one, and so soon as people addressed him, his lips left off moving, and his eyes no longer seemed alive. A few hours before the barricade was attacked he had assumed a posture which he had not quitted since, with his two hands on his knees, and his head bent forward, as if he were looking into a precipice. Nothing could have drawn him out of this attitude, and it did not appear as if his mind were in the barricade. When every one else went to his post the only persons left in the room were Javert tied to the post, an insurgent with drawn sabre watching over Javert, and Mabœuf. At the moment of the attack, at the detonation, the physical shock affected and as it were awoke him: he suddenly rose, crossed the room, and while Enjolras was appealing for a volunteer to replace the flag the old man was seen on the threshold of the wine-shop. His presence produced a species of commotion in the groups, and the cry was raised,—

"It is the voter, the conventionalist, the representative of the people!"

He probably did not hear it: he walked straight up to Enjolras, the insurgents making way for him with a religious fear, tore the flag from Enjolras, who was holding it in his hand, and then, no one daring to arrest or help him, this old man of eighty, with shaking head, but firm step, slowly began ascending the staircase of paving-stones formed inside the barricade. This was so gloomy and so grand that all around him cried "Off with your hats." With each step he ascended

the scene became more frightful, his white hair, his decrepit face, his tall, bald, and wrinkled forehead, his hollow eyes, his amazed and open mouth, and his old arm raising the red banner, stood out from the darkness and were magnified in the sanguinary brightness of the torch, and the spectators fancied they saw the spectre of '93 issuing from the ground holding the flag of terror in his hand. When he was on the last step, when this trembling and terrible phantom, standing on the pile of ruins, in the presence of twelve hundred invisible gun-barrels, stood facing death, and as if stronger than it, the whole barricade assumed a supernatural and colossal aspect in the darkness. There was one of those silences which only occur at the sight of prodigies; and in the midst of this silence the old man brandished the red flag and cried,—

"Long live the revolution! long live the republic! fraternity! equality! and death!"

A low and quick talking, like the murmur of a hurried priest galloping through a mass, was heard,—it was probably the police commissary making the legal summons at the other end of the street; then the same loud voice which had shouted "Who goes there" cried,—

"Withdraw!"

M. Mabœuf, livid, haggard, with his eye-balls illumined by the mournful flames of mania, raised the flag about his head and repeated,—

"Long live the republic."

"Fire!" the voice commanded.

A second discharge, resembling a round of grape-shot, burst against the barricade; the old man sank on his knees, then rose again, let the flag slip from his hand, and fell back on the pavement like a log, with his arms stretched out like a cross. Streams of blood flowed under him, and his old, pale, melancholy face seemed to be gazing at heaven. One of those emotions stronger than man, which makes him forget self-defence, seized on the insurgents, and they approached the corpse with respectful horror.

"What men these regicides are," said Enjolras.

Courfeyrac whispered in Enjolras' ear,—

"This is only between ourselves, as I do not wish to diminish the enthusiam, but this man was anything rather than a

egicide. I knew him, and his name was Mabœuf. I do not know what was the matter with him to-day, but he was a brave idiot. Look at his head."

"The head of an idiot and the heart of Brutus!" Enjolras replied, then he raised his voice.

"Citizens! such is the example which the old give to the young. We hesitated and he came; we recoiled and he advanced. This is what those who tremble with old age teach those who tremble with fear! This aged man is august before his country; he has had a long life and a magnificent death! Now let us place his corpse under cover, let each of us defend this dead old man as he would defend his living father, and let his presence in the midst of us render the barricade impregnable!"

During this period little Gavroche, who alone had not left his post, and had remained on the watch, fancied he could see men creeping up to the barricade: all at once he cried, "Look out!" Courfeyrac, Enjolras, Jean Pourvaire, Combeferre, Joly, Bahorel, and Bossuet, all hurried tumultuously out of the wine-shop, but it was almost too late; for they saw a flashing line of bayonets undulating on the crest of the barricade. Municipal Guards of tall stature penetrated, some by striding over the omnibus, others through the sally-port, driving before them the gamin, who fell back, but did not fly. The moment was critical; it was that first formidable minute of inundation when the river rises to the level of the dam and the water begins to filter through the fissures of the dyke. One second more, and the barricade was captured. Bahorel dashed at the first Municipal Guard who entered, and killed him with a shot from his carbine; the second killed Bahorel with a bayonet-thrust. Another had already levelled Courfeyrac, who was shouting Help! while the tallest of all of them, a species of Colossus, was marching upon Gavroche, with his bayonet at the charge. The gamin raised in his little arms Javert's enormous musket, resolutely aimed at the giant, and pulled the trigger. But the gun did not go off, as Javert had not loaded it: the Municipal Guard burst into a laugh, and advanced upon the lad. Before the bayonet had reached Gavroche, however, the musket fell from the soldier's hands, for a bullet struck him in the middle of the forehead, and he fell on his back. A second bullet struck

the other Guard, who had attacked Courfeyrac, in the middle of the chest, and laid him low.

The shots were fired by Marius, who had just entered the barricade.

Marius, still concealed at the corner of the Rue Mondétour, had watched the first phase of the combat with shuddering irresolution. Still he was unable to resist for any length of time that mysterious and sovereign dizziness which might be called the appeal from the abyss: and at the sight of the imminence of the peril, of M. Mabœuf's death, that mournful enigma, Bahorel killed, Courfeyrac shouting for help, this child menaced, and his friends to succour or revenge, all hesitation vanished, and he rushed into the medley pistols in hand. With the first shot he saved Gavroche, and with the second delivered Courfeyrac. On hearing the shots, and the cries of the guards, the assailants swarmed up the entrenchment, over the crest of which could now be seen more than half the bodies of Municipal Guards, troops of the line, and National Guards from the suburbs, musket in hand. They already covered more than two-thirds of the barricade, but did not dare to leap down into the enclosure, and hesitated, as if they feared some snare. They looked down into the gloomy space as they would have peered into a lion's den; and the light of the torch only illumined bayonets, bearskin shakos, and anxious and irritated faces.

Marius had no longer a weapon, as he had thrown away his discharged pistols, but he had noticed the barrel of gunpowder near the door of the ground-floor room. As he half turned to look in that direction a soldier levelled his musket at him, and at the moment when the soldier was taking steady aim at Marius, a hand was laid on the muzzle of his musket and stopped it up; a young workman in velvet trousers had rushed forward. The shot was fired, the bullet passed through the hand, and probably through the workman, for he fell, but did not hit Marius. Marius, who was entering the wineshop, hardly noticed this; still he had confusedly seen the gun pointed at him, and the hand laid on the muzzle, and had heard the explosion. But in minutes like this things that men see vacillate, and they do not dwell on anything, for they feel themselves obscurely impelled toward deeper shadows still, and all is mist. The insurgents, surprised but not ter-

rified, had rallied, and Enjolras cried, "Wait, do not throw away your shot!" and in truth, in the first moment of confusion they might wound each other. The majority had gone up to the first-floor and attic windows, whence they commanded the assailants, but the more determined, with Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, and Combeferre, were haughtily standing against the houses at the end, unprotected and facing the lines of soldiers and guards who crowned the barricade. All this was done without precipitation, and with that strange and menacing gravity which precedes a combat; on both sides men were aiming at each other within point-blank range, and they were so near that they could converse. When they were at the point where the spark was about to shoot forth, an officer wearing a gorget and heavy epaulettes stretched out his sword, and said,—

"Throw down your arms!"

"Fire!" Enjolras commanded.

The two detonations took place at the same moment, and everything disappeared in smoke, a sharp and stifling smoke in which the dying and the wounded writhed, with faint and hollow groans. When the smoke dispersed, the two lines of combatants could be seen thinned, but at the same spot, and silently reloading their guns. All at once a thundering voice was heard shouting,—

"Begone, or I will blow up the barricade!"

All turned to the quarter whence the voice came.

Marius had entered the wine-shop, fetched the barrel of gunpowder, and then, taking advantage of the smoke and obscure mist which filled the entrenched space, glided along the barricade up to a cage of paving-stones in which a torch was fixed. To tear out the torch, place in its stead the barrel of powder, throw down the pile of paving-stones on the barrel, which was at once unheaded with a sort of terrible obedience, had only occupied so much time as stooping and rising again; and now all, National Guards and Municipal Guards, officers and privates, collected at the other end of the barricade, gazed at him in stupor, as he stood with one foot on the paving-stone, the torch in his hand, his haughty face illumined by a fatal resolution, approaching the flame of the torch to the formidable heap in which the broken powder-barrel could be distinguished, and uttering the terrifying cry,—

"Begone, or I will blow up the barricade!"

Marius, on this barricade after the octogenarian, was the vision of the young revolution after the apparition of the old one.

"Blow up the barricade!" a sergeant said, "and yourself too!"

Marius answered, "and myself too!"

And he lowered the torch toward the barrel of gunpowder; but there was no one left on the barricade; the assailants leaving their dead and their wounded, fell back pellmell and in disorder to the end of the street, and disappeared again in the night. It was a *sauve qui peut*, and the barricade was saved. All surrounded Marius, and Courfeyrac fell on his neck.

"Here you are!"

"What happiness!" said Combeferre.

"You arrived just in time," said Bossuet.

"Were it not for you I should be dead!" Courfeyrac remarked.

"Without you I should have been goosed," Gavroche added.

Marius asked,—

"Who is the leader?"

"Yourself," Enjolras replied.

Marius the whole day through had had a furnace in his brain, but now it was a tornado, and this tornado which was in him produced on him the effect of being outside him and carrying him away. It seemed to him as if he were already an immense distance from life, and his two luminous months of joy and love suddenly terminated at this frightful precipice. Cosette lost to him, this barricade, M. Mabœuf letting himself be killed for the Republic, himself chief of the insurgents—all these things seemed to him a monstrous nightmare, and he was obliged to make a mental effort in order to remind himself that all which surrounded him was real. Marius had not lived long enough yet to know that nothing is so imminent as the impossible, and that what must be always foreseen is the unforeseen. He witnessed the performance of his own drama, as if it were a piece of which he understood nothing. In his mental fog he did not recognize Javert, who, fastened to his post, had not made a movement of his head during the attack on the barricade, and saw the revolt buzzing round him with the resignation of a martyr and the majesty of a judge. In the

meanwhile, the assailants no longer stirred; they could be heard marching and moving at the end of the street, but did not venture into it, either because they were waiting for orders, or else required reinforcements, before rushing again upon this impregnable redoubt. The insurgents had posted sentries, and some who were medical students had begun dressing wounds. All the tables had been dragged out of the wine-shop, with the exception of the two reserved for the lint and the cartridges, and the one on which Father Mabœuf lay.

It is a singularity of this sort of war, that the attack on barricades is almost always made in the front, and that the assailants generally refrain from turning positions, either because they suspect ambuscades, or are afraid to enter winding streets. The whole attention of the insurgents was, consequently, directed to the great barricade, which was evidently the constantly threatened point, and the contest would infallibly recommence there. Marius, however, thought of the little barricade, and went to it; it was deserted, and only guarded by the lamp which flickered among the paving stones. However, the Mondétour Lane and the branches of the little Truanderie were perfectly calm. As Marius, after making his inspection, was going back, he heard his name faintly uttered in the darkness,—

"Monsieur Marius!"

He started, for he recognized the voice which had summoned him two hours back through the garden railings in the Rue Plumet.

"Monsieur Marius!" the voice repeated; this time he could not doubt, for he had heard distinctly; he looked around but saw nothing.

"At your feet," the voice said.

He stooped down, and caught a glimpse of a pale face raised to him, and said,—

"Do you not recognize me?"

"No."

"Eponine."

Marius eagerly stooped down; it was really that hapless girl, dressed in male clothes. Eponine, it seems, under the influence of her jealousy of Cosette, having learned at Courfeyrac's their intention of going to the Barricades, had reckoned on Marius's despair on the disappearance of her he

loved, and in the tragic hope of jealous souls that he might at least die with her, had given him that mysterious summons to the post of danger which she knew he would not disregard.

"What brought you here? what are you doing?"

"Dying," she said to him.

There are words and incidents that wake up crushed beings; Marius cried with a start,—

"You are wounded! wait, I will carry you into the wine-shop! your wound will be dressed! where is it you suffer?"

And he tried to pass his hand under her to lift her, and as he did so he touched her hand—she uttered a faint cry.

"Have I hurt you?" Marius asked, "I only touched your hand."

She raised her hand to Marius's eye, and he could see a hole right through it.

"What is the matter with your hand?" he said.

"It is pierced."

"What with?"

"A bullet."

"How?"

"Did you see a musket aimed at you?"

"Yes, and a hand laid on the muzzle."

"It was mine."

Marius shuddered.

"What madness! poor child! but all the better, if that is your wound, it is nothing, so let me carry you to a bed. Your wound will be dressed, and people do not die of a bullet through the hand."

She murmured,—

"The bullet passed through my hand, but came out of my back, so it is useless to move me from here. I will tell you how you can do me more good than a surgeon; sit down by my side on that stone."

He obeyed; she laid her head on his knees, and without looking at him, said,—

"Oh, how good that is, how comforting! There! I do not suffer now.

She was almost sitting up, but her voice was very low, and every now and then interrupted by the death-rattle. She put her face as close as she could to that of Marius, and added with a strange expression,—

"Come, I will not play you a trick: I have had a letter addressed to you in my pocket since yesterday; I was told to put it in the post, but kept it, as I did not wish it to reach you. But, perhaps, you will not be angry with me when we meet again ere long, for we shall meet again, shall we not? Take your letter"

She convulsively seized Marius's hand with her wounded hand, but seemed no longer to feel the suffering. She placed Marius's hand in her blouse pocket, and he really felt a paper.

Marius took the letter and she gave a nod of satisfaction and consolation

"Now, for my trouble; promise me——"

"What?" Marius asked.

"Promise me!"

"I do promise!"

"Promise to kiss me on the forehead when I am dead—I shall feel it."

She let her head fall again on Marius's knees and her eyes closed—he fancied the poor soul departed. Eponine remained motionless, but all at once, at the moment when Marius believed her eternally asleep, she slowly opened her eyes, and said to him with an accent whose gentleness seemed already to come from another world,—

"And then, Monsieur Marius, I think that I was a little bit in love with you."

She tried to smile once more, and expired.

Marius kept his promise; he deposited a kiss on this livid forehead, upon which an icy perspiration beaded. It was not an infidelity to Cosette, but a pensive and sweet farewell to an unhappy soul. He gently laid her on the ground and went off, for something told him that he could not read this letter in the presence of a corpse. He walked up to a candle on the ground-floor room; it was a little note folded and sealed with the elegant care peculiar to women. The address was in a feminine handwriting, and ran,—

"To Monsieur, Monsieur Marius Pontmercy, at M. Courfeyrac's, No. 16, Rue de la Verrerie."

He broke the seal and read:

"My well-beloved,—Alas, my father insists on our going away at once. We shall be this evening at No. 7, Rue de l'Homme Armé, and within a week in London.—COSETTE. June 4."

Such was the innocence of their love, that Marius did not even know Cosette's handwriting.

What had happened may be told in a few words. Eponine had done it all. After the night of June 3 she had had a double thought,—to foil the plans of her father and the bandits upon the house in the Rue Plumet, and separate Marius and Cosette. It was she who gave Jean Valjean the expressive warning, and he had gone straight home and said to Cosette, "We shall start this evening and go to the Rue de l'Homme Armé with Toussaint. Next week we shall be in London." Cosette, startled by this unexpected blow, had hastily written two lines to Marius, but how was she to put the letter in the post? She never went out alone, and Toussaint, surprised by such an errand, would certainly show the letter to M. Fauchelevent. In this state of anxiety, Cosette noticed through the railings Eponine in male clothes, who now incessantly prowled round the garden. Cosette had summoned "this young workman," and gave him the letter and a five-franc piece, saying,—"Carry this letter at once to its address," and Eponine put the letter in her pocket.

Marius covered Cosette's letter with kisses; she loved him then! and for a moment he had an idea that he ought not to die, but then he said to himself, "Her father is taking her to England, and my grandfather will not give his consent to the marriage; no change has taken place in fatality." Then he thought that two duties were left him to accomplish; inform Cossette of his death, and send her his last farewell, and save from the imminent catastrophe which was preparing that poor boy, Eponine's brother and Thénardier's son. He had a pocket-book about him, the same which had contained the paper on which he had written so many love-thoughts for Cosette; he tore out a leaf, and wrote in pencil these few lines—

"Our marriage was impossible; I asked my grandfather's consent, and he refused to give it; I have no fortune, nor have you. I ran to your house, and did not find you there; you remember the pledge I made to you, and I have kept it. I die. I love you, and when you read this my soul will be near you, and smile upon you."

Having nothing with which to seal this letter, he merely folded it, and wrote on it the address,

"To Mademoiselle Cosette Fauchelevent, at M. Fauchelevent's, No. 7, Rue de l'Homme Armé."

The letter folded, he stood for a moment in thought, then opened his pocket-book again, and wrote with the same pencil these lines on the first page.

"My name is Marius Pontmercy. Carry my body to my grandfather, M. Gillenormand, No. 6, Rue des Filles du Calvaire, in the Marais."

He returned the book to his coat pocket, and then summoned Gavroche. The lad, on hearing Marius's voice, ran up with his joyous and devoted face.

"Will you do something for me?" said Marius.

"Everything," said Gavroche. "God of Gods! my goose would have been cooked without you."

"You see this letter?"

"Yes."

"Take it. Leave the barricade at once (Gavroche began scratching his ear anxiously), and to-morrow morning you will deliver it at its address, No. 7, Rue de l'Homme Armé."

The heroic lad replied,—

"Well, but during that time the barricade will be attacked, and I shall not be here."

"The barricade will not be attacked again till daybreak, according to all appearances, and will not be taken till to-morrow afternoon."

The new respite which the assailants granted to the barricade was really prolonged; it was one of those intermittences frequent in night-fights, which are always followed by redoubled obstinacy.

"Well," said Gavroche, "suppose I were to deliver your letter to-morrow morning?"

"It will be too late, for the barricade will probably be blockaded, all the issues guarded, and you will be unable to get out. Be off at once."

Gavroche could not find any reply, so he stood there undecided, and scratching his head sorrowfully. All at once he seized the letter with one of those bird-like movements of his.

"All right," he said.

And he ran off toward the Mondétour Lane. Gavroche had an idea which decided him, but which he did not mention; it was the following.

"It is scarce midnight, the Rue de l'Homme Armé is no great distance off. I will deliver the letter at once, and be back in time."

CHAPTER XXII

On the evening of that same day, Jean Valjean, accompanied by Cosette and Toussaint, proceeded to the Rue de l'Homme Armé, where a tremendous incident was fated to take place. Cosette had not left the Rue Plumet without an attempt at resistance, and for the first time since they had lived together, the will of Cosette and the will of JeanValjean had contradicted each other, though they did not come into collision. There was objection on one side, and inflexibility on the other: for the abrupt advice to move, thrown to Jean Valjean by a stranger, had alarmed him to such a point as to render him absolute, and Cosette was compelled to yield. The pair reached the Rue de l'Homme Armé without exchanging a syllable, for each was so deep in personal thought. Jean Valjean had brought Toussaint with him, which he had never done in his previous absences, but he foresaw that he might possibly never return to the Rue Plumet, and he could neither leave Toussaint behind him nor tell her his secret. In his departure from the Rue Plumet, which was almost a flight, Jean Valjean took away with him nothing but the fragrant little portmanteau, christened by Cosette the *inseparable*. Cosette, herself, only took her desk and blotting-book. Jean Valjean, in order to heighten the solitude and mystery of this disappearance, had so arranged as to leave the Rue Plumet at night-fall, which had given Cosette the time to write her note to Marius. They reached the Rue de l'Homme Armé when it was quite dark.

At about 5 o'clock, Toussaint, who went about very busy with this small moving, placed a cold fowl on the dinner-table, which Cosette consented to look at, through deference for her father. This done, protesting a persistent headache, she said good-night to Jean Valjean, and shut herself up in her bed-room. Jean Valjean ate a wing of the fowl with appetite, and with his elbows on the table, and gradually growing reassured, regained possession of his serenity. While he was eating this modest dinner, he vaguely heard twice or thrice stammering Toussaint say to him, "There is a disturb-

ance, sir, and people are fighting in Paris." But, absorbed in a multitude of internal combinations, he had paid no attention to her; truth to tell, he had not heard her. He rose and began walking from the door to the window, and from the window to the door, with calmness. Cosette, his sole preoccupation, reverted to his mind, not that he was alarmed by this headache, a slight nervous attack, a girl's pouting, a momentary cloud, which would disappear in a day or two, but he thought of the future, and, as usual, thought of it gently. After all, he saw no obstacle to his happy life resuming its course: at certain hours everything seems impossible, at others everything appears easy, and Jean Valjean was in one of those good hours.

While slowly walking up and down, his eye suddenly fell on something strange. He noticed, facing him in the inclined mirror over the side-board, and read distinctly,—

"My well-beloved. Alas! my father insists on our leaving at once. We shall be this evening at No. 7, Rue de l'Homme Armé, and within a week in London.—Cosette, June 4th."

Jean Valjean stopped with haggard gaze. Cosette, on arriving, had laid her blotting-book on the side-board facing the mirror, and immersed in her painful thoughts, had forgotten it there, without even noticing that she left it open at the very page on which she had dried the few lines she had written and intrusted to the young workman passing along the Rue Plumet. The writing was imprinted on the blotting-paper, and the mirror reflected the writing. Jean Valjean walked up to the mirror and read the lines again, but did not believe in them. They produced on him the effect of appearing in a flash of lightning: it was an hallucination—it was impossible—it was not. Gradually his perception became more precise, he looked at Cosette's blotting-book, and the feeling of the real fact returned to him. He took up the blotting-book, saying, "It comes from that."

He held the book in his hand and gazed at it, stupidly happy, almost ready to laugh at the hallucination of which he had been the dupe. All at once his eyes fell again on the mirror, and he saw the vision again. Jean Valjean tottered, let the blotting-book slip from his grasp, and fell into the old easy-chair by the side of the side-board with hanging head and glassy, wandering eye. He said to himself that it was evident that

the light of this world was eclipsed. Alas! the supreme trial, we may say the sole trial, is the loss of the being whom we love. While Jean Valjean was thinking, Toussaint came in; he rose and asked her,—

"Do you know where about it is?"

Toussaint, in her stupefaction, could only answer,—

"I beg your pardon, sir."

"Did you not say just now that they were fighting?"

"Oh, yes, sir," Toussaint replied; "over at St. Merry."

There are some mechanical movements which come to us, without our cognizance, from our deepest thoughts. It was doubtless under the impulse of a movement of this nature, that Jean Valjean found himself five minutes later in the street. He was bareheaded, and sat down on the bench before his house, seemingly listening.

Night had set in.

The street was deserted; and a few anxious citizens who were hurriedly returning home scarce noticed him, for each for himself is the rule in times of peril. The lamplighter came as usual to light the lamp which was exactly opposite the door of No. 7, and went away. Jean Valjean would not have appeared to be a living man to any one who might have examined him in this gloom, and he sat on his bench motionless, like a statue of ice. His despair had got beyond congelation. The tocsin and vague stormy rumours could be heard, and in the midst of all these convulsions of the bell blended with the riot, the clock of St. Paul struck the eleventh hour, solemnly and without hurrying, for the tocsin is man, the hour is God. The passing of the hour produced no effect on Jean Valjean, and he did not stir. Almost immediately after, however, a sudden detonation broke out in the direction of the Halles, followed by a second even more violent,—it was probably that attack on the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie which we have just seen repulsed by Marius. At this double discharge, whose fury seemed increased by the stupor of the night, Jean Valjean started; he turned in the direction whence the sound came, but then fell back on his bench, crossed his arms, and his head slowly bent down again on his chest. He resumed his dark dialogue with himself.

All at once he raised his eyes, for there was some one in the street; by the light of the lamp he perceived a livid, young, and

radiant face, in the direction of the street which runs past the Archives. It was Gavroche, who had just arrived from the Rue de la Chanvrerie; Gavroche saw Jean Valjean distinctly, but paid no attention to him. After examining the fronts of several houses the gamin shrugged his shoulders, as if engaged in a colloquy with himself. Jean Valjean, who a moment previously, in his present state of mind, would neither have spoken to nor answered any one, felt an irresistible impulse to address this lad.

"My little boy," he said, "what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing," replied Gavroche. "Do you belong to this street?"

"Yes, why?"

"Can you point me out No. 7?"

"What do you want at No. 7?"

Here the lad stopped, for he feared lest he had said too much.

An idea flashed across Jean Valjean's mind, for agony has lucidities of that nature. He said to the boy,—

"Have you brought me the letter which I am expecting?"

"You?" said Gavroche, "you ain't a woman."

"The letter is for Mademoiselle Cosette, is it not?"

"Cosette?" Gavroche grumbled; "yes, I think it is that name."

"Well," Jean Valjean continued, "you have to deliver the letter to me, so give it here."

"In that case, you must be aware that I am sent from the barricade?"

"Of course," said Jean Valjean.

Gavroche thrust his hand into one of his pockets, and produced a square folded letter; then he gave the military salute.

"Respect for the despatch," he said; "it comes from the Provisional Government."

"Give it to me," said Jean Valjean.

"After all," Gavroche continued, "you look like an honest man."

"Make haste."

"Here it is."

And he handed the paper to Jean Valjean.

"That letter comes from the barricade in the Rue de la

Chanvrerie, and I am going back to it. Good night, citizen."

Jean Valjean re-entered with Marius's letter; in which, when he opened it, he only saw these words,—

"—I die: when you read this my soul will be near you."

In the presence of this line he felt a horrible bedazzlement; he remained for a moment as if crushed by the change of emotion which took place in him. He gazed at Marius's letter with a species of drunken amazement, he had before his eyes this splendour, the death of the hated being. The letter was evidently written to be read by Cosette on the next morning: since the two volleys he had heard between 11 o'clock and midnight nothing had occurred: the barricade would not be seriously attacked till day-break, but no matter, from the moment when "that man" is mixed up in this war, he is lost, he is caught in the cog-wheels. Jean Valjean felt himself delivered; he was going to find himself once more alone with Cosette, the rivalry ceased, and the future began again. He need only keep the note in his pocket, and Cosette would never know what had become of "that man." All this said internally, he became gloomy: he went down and roused the porter. About an hour later Jean Valjean left the house in the uniform of a National Guard and armed. The porter had easily obtained for him in the neighbourhood the articles to complete his equipment: he had a loaded musket and a full cartouche-box. He proceeded in the direction of the barricades.

The two most memorable barricades which the observer of social diseases can mention do not belong to the period in which the action of this book is laid. These two barricades, both symbols under different aspects of a formidable situation, emerged from the earth during the fatal insurrection of June 1848, the greatest street-war which history has seen.

The St. Antoine barricade was monstrous, it was three storeys high and seven hundred feet in width. It barred from one corner to the other the vast mouth of the Faubourg, that is to say, three streets. There were nineteen barricades erected in the streets behind the mother barricade, only, on seeing it, you felt in the Faubourg the immense agonizing suffering which had reached that extreme stage in which misery desires a catastrophe.

A quarter of a league further on, at the corner of the Rue Vieille du Temple, which debouches on the boulevard near the

Chateau d'Eau, if you boldly advanced your head beyond the point formed by the projection of the magazine Dallemagne, you could see in the distance across the canal, and at the highest point of the ascent to Belleville, a strange wall rising to the second floor and forming a sort of connecting link between the houses on the right and those on the left, as if the street had folded back its highest wall in order to close itself up. This was built of paving-stones ; it was tall, straight, correct, cold, perpendicular, and levelled with the plumb-line and the square ; of course there was no cement, but, as in some Roman walls, this in no way disturbed its rigid architecture. From its height, its depth could be guessed, for the entablature was mathematically parallel to the basement. At regular distances almost invisible loopholes, resembling black threads, could be distinguished in the grey wall. This street was deserted throughout its length, and all the windows and doors were closed. In the background rose this bar, which converted the street into a blind alley ; it was a motionless and tranquil wall, no one was seen, nothing was heard, not a cry, nor a sound, nor a breath. It was a sepulchre. The dazzling June sun inundated this terrible thing with light,—it was the barricade of the Faubourg du Temple. So soon as you reached the ground and perceived it, it was impossible even for the boldest not to become pensive in the presence of this mysterious apparition. It was adjusted, clamped, imbricated, rectilinear, symmetrical, and funereal, and there were there science and darkness. You felt that the chief of this barricade was a geometrician or a spectre, and as you gazed you spoke in a whisper. From time to time if any one, private, officer, or representative of the people, ventured to cross the solitary road, a shrill faint whistling was heard, and the passer-by fell wounded or dead, or, if he escaped, a bullet could be seen to bury itself in some shutter, or the stucco of the wall.

These two fortresses were built by two men, Cournet and Barthelemy : Cournet made the St. Antoine barricade, Barthelemy the Temple barricade, and each of them was the image of the man who built it. Cournet was a man of tall stature ; he had wide shoulders, a red face, a smashing fist, a brave heart, a loyal soul, a sincere and terrible eye. He was intrepid, energetic, irascible, and stormy ; the most cordial of men, and the most formidable of combatants. He had been an officer

in the navy, and from his gestures and his voice it could be divined that he issued from the ocean and came from the tempest. Omitting the genius, there was in Cournet something of Danton, as, omitting the divinity, there was in Danton something of Hercules. Barthelemy, thin, weak, pale, and taciturn, was a species of tragical gamin, who, having been struck by a policeman, watched for him, waited for him, and killed him, and at the age of seventeen was sent to the galleys. He came out and built this barricade. At a later date, when both were exiles in London, Barthelemy killed Cournet: it was a melancholy duel. Some time after that, Barthelemy, caught in the cog-wheels of one of those mysterious adventures in which passion is mingled, catastrophes in which French justice sees extenuating circumstances, and English justice only sees death, was hanged. The gloomy social edifice is so built that, owing to material denudation and moral darkness, this wretched being who had an intellect, certainly firm and possibly great, began with the galleys in France and ended with the gibbet in England. Barthelemy only hoisted one flag,—it was the black one.

Sixteen years count in the subterranean education of revolt, and June, 1848, knew a great deal more than June, 1832. Hence the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrerie was only a sketch and an embryo, when compared with the two colossal barricades to which we have just referred, but for the period it was formidable. The insurgents under the eye of Enjolras, for Marius no longer looked at anything, had turned the night to good account: the barricade had not only been repaired, but increased. It had been raised two feet, and iron bars planted in the paving-stones resembled couched lances. All sorts of rubbish, added and brought from all sides, complicated the external confusion, and the redoubt had been cleverly converted into a wall inside and a thicket outside. A staircase of paving-stones, which allowed the top of the barricade to be reached, was formed, the ground-floor of the room of the inn was cleared out, the kitchen converted into an infirmary, the wounds were dressed, the powder, scattered about the tables and floor, was collected, bullets were cast, cartridges manufactured, lint plucked, the fallen arms distributed; the dead were carried off and laid in a heap, in the Mondétour Lane, of which they were still masters. The pavement remained for a long time red at that spot. Among the dead were four sub-

urban National Guards, and Enjolras ordered their uniforms to be laid on one side. Enjolras had advised two hours' sleep, and his advice was an order, still only three or four took advantage of it, and Feuilly employed the two hours in engraving this inscription on the wall, facing the wine-shop,—

"LONG LIVE THE PEOPLES."

These four words, carved in the stone with a nail, could still be read on this wall in 1848. The three women took advantage of the respite to disappear entirely, which allowed the insurgents to breathe more at their ease; and they contrived to find refuge in some neighbouring house. Most of the wounded could and would still fight. There were, on a pile of mattresses and trusses of straw laid in the kitchen converted into an infirmary, five men seriously wounded, of whom two were Municipal Guards; the wounds of the latter were dressed first. No one remained in the ground-floor room, save Mabœuf under his black cere-cloth, and Javert fastened to the post.

"This is the charnel-house," said Enjolras.

In the interior of this room, which was scarce lighted by a solitary candle, the mortuary table at the end being behind the post like a horizontal bar, a sort of large vague cross resulted from Javert standing and Mabœuf lying down. Although the pole of the omnibus was mutilated by the bullets, sufficient remained for a flag to be attached to it. Enjolras, who possessed that quality of a chief of always doing what he said, fastened to it the bullet-pierced and blood-stained coat of the killed old man. No meal was possible, for there was neither bread nor meat. The fifty men during the sixteen hours they had stood at the barricade speedily exhausted the scanty provisions of the inn. At a given moment every barricade that holds out becomes the raft of the *Meduse*, and the combatants must resign themselves to hunger. They had reached the early hours of that Spartan day, June 6, when at the barricade of St. Merry, Jeanne, surrounded by insurgents who cried for bread, answered, "What for? It is three o'clock, also at four we shall be dead." As they could no longer eat, Enjolras prohibited drinking; he put the wine under an interdict, and served out the spirits. Some fifteen full bottles, hermetically sealed, were found in the cellar, which Enjolras and Combeferre examined. Combeferre, on coming up again, said, "It belongs to Father

Hucheloup's stock at the time when he was a grocer." "It must be real wine," Bossuet observed; "it is lucky that Grantaire is asleep, for, if he were up, we should have a difficulty in saving those bottles." Enjolras, in spite of the murmurs, put his veto on the fifteen bottles, and in order that no one might touch them, and that they should be to some extent sacred, he had placed them under the table on which Father Mabœuf lay.

At about two in the morning they counted their strength; there were still thirty-seven. Day was beginning to appear; but the interior of the barricade, that species of small yard taken from the street, was still bathed in darkness, and resembled, through the vague twilight horror, the deck of a dismasted ship. The combatants moved about like black forms. Above this frightful nest of gloom the floors of the silent houses stood out lividly, and above them again the chimney-pots were assuming a roseate hue. The sky had that charming tint which may be white and may be blue, and the birds flew about in it with twitterings of joy. The tall house which formed the background of the barricade looked to the east, and had a pink reflection on its roof. At the third-floor window the morning breeze blew about the grey hair on the head of the dead man.

Enjolras had gone out to reconnoitre, and had left by the Mondétour Lane, keeping in the shadow of the houses. The tocsin of St. Merry, which had not ceased once since the previous evening, could be heard, and this was a proof that the other barricade, the great one, Jeanne's, still held out. All these hopes were interchanged by the groups with a species of gay and formidable buzzing, which resemble the war-hum or a swarm of bees. Enjolras reappeared returning from his gloomy walk in the external darkness.

"The whole army of Paris is out," he said, "and one-third of that army is preparing to attack the barricade behind which you now are. There is. too. the National Guard. I distinguished the shakos of the fifth line regiment, and the guidons of the sixth legion. You will be attacked in an hour; as for the people, they were in a state of ferment yesterday, but this morning do not stir. There is nothing to wait for, nothing to hope; no more a faubourg than a regiment. You are abandoned."

"Be it so," a voice replied. "Let us raise the barricade to a height of twenty feet, and all fall upon it. Citizens, let us offer the protest of corpses, and show that if the people abandon

the republicans the republicans do not abandon the people."

After the man, whoever he might be, who decreed the "protest of corpses," had spoken, and given the formula of the common soul, a strangely satisfied and terrible cry issued from every mouth, funereal in its meaning, and triumphal in its accent.

"Long live death! Let us all remain here."

"Why all?" Enjolras asked.

"All, all!"

Enjolras continued,—

"The position is good and the barricade fine. Thirty men are sufficient, then why sacrifice forty?"

They replied,—

"Because not one of us will go away."

"Citizens," Enjolras cried, and there was in his voice an almost irritated vibration, "the republic is not rich enough in men to make an unnecessary outlay. If it be the duty of some to go away, that duty must be performed like any other."

Then pointing to the four uniforms which, with their cross-belts and shakos, he had laid aside, he added: "In this uniform it is easy to enter the ranks and escape. Here are four at any rate."

And he threw the four uniforms on the unpaved ground; but as no one moved in the stoical audience Combeferre resolved to make an appeal.

"Come," he said, "you must show a little pity. Do you know what the question is here? It is about women. Look you, are there wives, yes or no? are there children, yes or no? When a man supports his relatives by his toil, he has no longer any right to sacrifice himself, for that is deserting his family. And then, too, those who have daughters, and those who have sisters! only think of them. You let yourselves be killed, you are dead, very good; and to-morrow? It is terrible when girls have no bread, for a man begs, but a woman sells. I repeat, it is a question of wives, of mothers, of daughters, and babes. Am I saying anything about you? I know very well what you are. I know that you are all brave. But you are not alone in this world, and there are other beings of whom you must think; you should not be selfish."

All hung their heads with a gloomy air, strange contradictions of the human heart in the sublimest moments! Marius,

fasting and feverish, who had successively given up all hope, cast ashore on grief, the most mournful of shipwrecks, saturated with violent emotions, and feeling the end coming, had buried himself deeper and deeper in that visionary stupor which ever precedes the fatal and voluntarily accepted hour. He had but one idea, to die, and he did not wish to avert his attention from it, but he thought in his gloomy somnambulism that in destroying himself he was not prohibited from saving somebody. He raised his voice,—

"Enjolras and Combeferre are right," he said, "let us have no useless sacrifice. I join them, and we must make haste. Combeferre has told you decisive things: there are men among you who have families, mothers, sisters, wives, and children. Such must leave the ranks."

"Citizens," Enjolras added, "we have a republic here, and universal suffrage reigns. Point out yourselves the men who are to leave us."

They obeyed, and at the end of a few minutes five were unanimously pointed out and left the ranks.

"There are five of them!" Marius exclaimed.

There were only four uniforms.

"Well," the five replied, "one will have to remain behind."

And then came who should remain, and who should find reasons for others not to remain. The generous quarrel began again.

"Make haste," Courfeyrac repeated.

Cries to Marius came from the groups.

"You must point out the one who is to remain."

"Yes!" the five said, "do you choose, and we will obey you."

Marius did not believe himself capable of any emotion; still at this idea of choosing a man for death all the blood flowed back to his heart, and he would have turned pale could he have grown paler. He walked up to the five, who smiled upon him, and each, with his eye full of that great flame which gleams through history on Thermopylæ, cried to him,—

"I! I! I!"

And Marius stupidly counted them. There were still five! Then his eyes settled on the four uniforms. All at once a fifth uniform fell, as if from heaven, on the other four; the fifth man was saved. Marius raised his eyes, and recognized M. Fauchelevent. Jean Valjean had just entered the barricade;

either through information he had obtained, through instinct, or through accident, he arrived by the Mondétour Lane, and, thanks to his National Guard uniform, passed without difficulty. At the moment when Jean Valjean entered the redoubt, no one noticed him, for all eyes were fixed on the five chosen men and the four uniforms. Jean Valjean, however, had seen and heard, and silently took off his coat and threw it on the pile formed by the other coats. The emotion was indescribable.

"Who is this man?" Bossuet asked.

"He is a man," Combeferre replied, "who saves his fellow-man."

Marius added in a grave voice,—

"I know him."

This bail was sufficient for all, and Enjolras turned to Jean Valjean.

"Citizen, you are welcome."

And he added,—"You are aware that you will die."

Jean Valjean, without answering, helped the man he was saving to put on his uniform.

The five men selected left the barricade by the Mondétour Lane, perfectly resembling National Guards. One of them wept as he went away, and before doing so they embraced those who remained. When the five men sent back to life had left, Enjolras thought of the one condemned to death. He went to the ground-floor room, where Javert, tied to the post, was reflecting.

"Do you want anything?" Enjolras asked him.

Javert answered,—

"When will you kill me?"

"Wait. We require all our cartridges at this moment."

"In that case, give me some drink," Javert said.

Enjolras himself held out to him a glass of water, and, as Javert was bound, helped him to drink.

"Is that all?" Enjolras resumed.

"I feel uncomfortable at this post," Javert replied; "you did not act kindly in leaving me fastened to it the whole night. Bind me as you please, but you might surely lay me on a table, like the other man."

And with a nod of the head he pointed to M. Mabœuf's corpse. Looking round, Enjolras observed at the end of the room a long wide table on which bullets had been run and cartridges made. All the cartridges being made, and all the

powder expended, this table was free. By Enjolras's order four insurgents unfastened Javert from the post, and while they did so a fifth held a bayonet to his chest. His hands remained fastened behind his back, a thin strong cord was attached to his feet, which enabled him to walk fifteen inches, like those who are going to ascend the scaffold, and he was forced to walk to the table at the end of the room, on which they laid him securely fastened round the waist. While Javert was being bound a man standing in the door-way regarded him with singular attention, and the shadow this man cast caused Javert to turn his head. He raised his eyes and recognized Jean Valjean, but he did not even start, he merely looked down haughtily, and restricted himself to saying, "It is quite simple."

Meanwhile day had dawned, and though the streets were still deserted, there was a mysterious movement at a certain distance off. It was evident that the critical moment was arriving, and, as on the previous evening, the vedettes fell back. The Mondétour Lane having been blocked up during the night, the barricade was now impregnable, but they were enclosed within it. So soon as Enjolras had taken his double-barrelled gun, and placed himself at a species of parapet which he reserved for himself, all were silent; a quick sharp crackling ran confusedly along the wall of paving-stones; it was the muskets being cocked. As on the previous evening, all their attention was turned upon the end of the street, which was now lighted up and visible. They had not long to wait ere the movement began again distinctly in the direction of St. Leu, but it did not resemble the sound of the first attack. A rattling of chains, the alarming rolling of a heavy weight, a clang of bronze leaping on the pavement, and a species of solemn noise, announced that a sinister engine was approaching. The fixity of the eyes turned toward the end of the street became stern, as a cannon appeared. The gunners pushed the gun on; the limber was detached, and two men supported the carriage, while four were at the wheels, others followed with the tumbril, and the lighted match could be seen smoking.

"Fire!" shouted Enjolras.

The whole barricade burst into a flame, and the detonation was frightful; an avalanche of smoke covered and concealed the gun and the men. A few seconds after the cloud was dispersed, and the gun and the men reappeared: the gunners were bring-

ing it up to the front of the barricade, slowly, correctly, and without hurry, not one had been wounded.

"Reload your guns," said Enjolras.

While the insurgents were reloading their guns the artillerymen loaded the cannon. The anxiety within the redoubt was profound; the shot was fired, and the detonation burst forth.

"Present!" a joyous voice cried.

And at the same time as the cannon-ball struck the barricade, Gavroche bounded inside it. He came from the direction of the Rue du Cygne, and actively clambered over the accessory barricade which fronted the labyrinth of the little Truanderie. Gavroche produced greater effect at the barricade than the cannon-ball did; for the latter was lost in the heap of rubbish. It had broken a wheel of the omnibus, and finished the old truck, on seeing which the insurgents burst into a laugh."

"Pray go on," Bossuet cried to the gunners.

Gavroche was surrounded, but he had not time to report anything, as Marius, shuddering, drew him on one side.

"What have you come to do here?"

"What a question?" the boy said, "and you, pray?"

"Who told you to return? I only trust that you have delivered my letter at its address."

Gavroche felt some degree of remorse in the matter of the letter; for, in his hurry to return to the barricade, he had got rid of it rather than delivered it. He took the simplest process to get out of the scrape,—he told an abominable falsehood.

"Citizen, I delivered the letter to the porter. The lady was asleep, and she will have the letter when she wakes."

Marius had two objects in sending the letter,—to bid Cosette farewell and save Gavroche. He was obliged to satisfy himself with one half of what he wanted. The connexion between the sending of the letter and M. Fauchelevent's presence at the barricade occurred to his mind, and he pointed him out to Gavroche.

"Do you know that man?"

"No," said Gavroche.

Gavroche, in truth, as we know, had only seen Jean Valjean by night. The troubled and sickly conjectures formed in Marius's mind were dissipated; did he know M. Fauchelevent's opinions? Perhaps he was a republican. Hence his presence in the action would be perfectly simple.

Enjolras was in the meanwhile watching at his loop-hole with open ears; for the assailants, doubtless little satisfied with the gun-shot, had not repeated it. A company of line infantry had come up to occupy the extremity of the street behind the gun. The soldiers unpaved the street, and erected with the stones a small low wall, a species of epaulement, only eighteen inches high, and facing the barricade. At the left-hand angle of this work could be seen the head of a suburban column, massed in the Rue St. Denis. Enjolras, from his post, fancied he could hear the peculiar sound produced by canister when taken out of its box, and he saw the captain of the gun change his aim and turn the gun's muzzle slightly to the left. Then the gunners began loading, and the captain of the gun himself took the port-fire and walked up to the vent.

"Fall on your knees all along the barricade," Enjolras shouted.

But ere Enjolras's order was executed, the discharge took place with the frightful rattle of a round of grape-shot. The shot was aimed at the opening in the redoubt, and ricochetted against the wall, killing two men and wounding three. If this continued the barricade would be no longer tenable, for the grape-shot entered it. There was a murmur of consternation.

"Let us stop a second round," Enjolras said: and levelling his gun he aimed at the firer, who was leaning over the breech and rectifying the aim. The firer was a handsome young sergeant of artillery, fair, gentle-faced, and having the intelligent look peculiar to that predestined and formidable arm which, owing to its constant improvement, must end by killing war. Enjolras pulled the trigger, and the fire flashed forth. The artilleryman turned twice on his heel, with his arms stretched out before him, and his head raised as if to breathe the air, and then fell across the cannon motionless. His back could be seen, from the middle of which a jet of blood gushed forth; the bullet had gone right through his chest, and he was dead.

The fire of the assailants continued, and the musketry and grape-shot alternated, though without producing much mischief. The upper part of Corinth alone suffered, and the first-floor and garret windows, pierced by slugs and bullets, gradually lost their shape. The combatants posted there were compelled to withdraw, but, in fact, such are the tactics of an attack on a barricade, to skirmish for a long time and exhaust the ammunition of the insurgents, if they commit the error of returning

the fire. When it is discovered by the slackening of their fire that they had no powder or ball left, the assault is made. Enjolras had not fallen into this trap, and the barricade did not reply. At each platoon fire, Gavroche thrust his tongue into his cheek, a sign of supreme disdain.

"That's good," he said, "tear up the linen, for we require lint."

Courfeyrac addressed the grape-shot on its want of effect, and said to the cannon,—

"You are becoming diffuse, my good fellow."

In battle intrigues take place as at a ball; and it is probable that the silence of the redoubt was beginning to render the assailants anxious, and make them fear lest some unexpected incident had occurred. The insurgents suddenly perceived a helmet glistening in the sun upon an adjoining roof; a sapper was leaning against a tall chimney-pot, and apparently a sentry there. He looked down into the barricade.

"That's a troublesome spy," said Enjolras.

Jean Valjean, who had his musket in his hand, had also observed him. Without saying a word he aimed at the sapper, and a second later the helmet, struck by a bullet, fell noisily into the street. The soldier disappeared with all possible haste. A second watchman took his place, and it was an officer. Jean Valjean, who had reloaded his musket, aimed at the new-comer, and sent the officer's helmet to join the private's. The officer was not obstinate, but withdrew very quickly. This time the hint was understood, and no one again appeared on the roof.

"Why did you not kill the man?" Bossuet asked Jean Valjean, who, however, made no reply.

A second piece of artillery now came on the stage. The gunners rapidly got it into position by the side of the first one, and this was the beginning of the end. A few minutes later both guns, being actively served, were at work against the barricade, and the platoon fire of the line and the suburban National Guards supported the artillery. Another cannonade was audible some distance off. At the same time as the two guns were furiously assaulting the redoubt in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, two other pieces placed in a position, one in the Rue St. Denis, the other in the Rue Aubrey-le-Boucher, were pounding the St. Merry barricade. The four guns formed a lugubrious echo to each other, and the barks of the grim dogs of war responded

to each other. Of the two guns now opened on the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, one fired shell, the other solid shot.

"The annoyance of these guns must be reduced," said Enjolras, and he shouted, "Fire at the artillerymen."

All were ready,—the barricade, which had so long been silent, was belted with flame; seven or eight rounds succeeded each other with a sort of rage and joy; the street was filled with a blinding smoke, and at the expiration of a few minutes there might be confusedly seen through the mist, all striped with flame, two-thirds of the artillerymen lying under the gun-wheels. Those who remained standing continued to serve the guns with a stern tranquillity, but the fire was reduced.

"Things are going well," said Bossuet to Enjolras, "that is a success."

Enjolras shook his head and replied,—

"Another quarter of an hour of that success, and there will not be a dozen cartridges left in the barricade."

It appears that Gavroche heard the remark, for Courfeyrac all at once perceived somebody in the street, at the foot of the barricade, amid the shower of bullets. Gavroche had fetched a hamper from the pot-house, passed through a gap, and was quickly engaged in emptying into it the full cartouche-boxes of the National Guards killed on the slope of the barricade.

The troops aimed at him incessantly, and constantly missed him, and the National Guards and the soldiers laughed, while covering him. He lay down, then rose again, hid himself in a door-way, then bounded, disappeared, reappeared, ran off, came back, replied to the grape-shot by taking a sight, and all the while plundered cartridges, emptied boxes, and filled his hamper. The insurgents watched him, as they panted with anxiety, but while the barricade trembled he sang. He was not a child, he was not a man, he was a strange goblin gamin, and he resembled the invulnerable dwarf of the combat. The bullets ran after him, but he was more active than they; he played a frightful game of hide and seek with death. One bullet, however, better aimed or more treacherous than the rest, at length struck the Will-o'-the-wisp lad; Gavroche was seen to totter and then to sink. The whole barricade uttered a cry, but there was an Antæus in this pigmy: for a gamin to touch the pavement is like the giant touching the earth; and Gavroche had only fallen to rise again. He remained in a sitting pos-

ture, a long jet of blood ran down his face, he raised both arms in the air, looked in the direction whence the shot had come, and began singing,—

Je suis tombé par terre,
C'est la faute à Voltaire :
Le nez dans le ruisseau,
C'est la faute à——

He did not finish, for a second shot from the same marksman stopped him short. This time he lay with his face on the pavement, and did not stir again. This little great soul had fled away.

Marius rushed out of the barricade, and Combeferre followed him ; but it was too late, and Gavroche was dead. Combeferre brought in the hamper of cartridges, and Marius the boy. Alas ! he thought he was requiting the son for what the father had done for his father ; but Thénardier had brought in his father alive, while he brought in the lad dead. Combeferre distributed the cartridges which he had brought in, and they gave each man fifteen rounds to fire. Jean Valjean meanwhile was sitting motionless on a bench. When Combeferre offered him his fifteen cartridges he shook his head.

" That is a strange eccentric," Combeferre said in a whisper to Enjolras. " He manages not to fight inside this barricade."

" Which does not prevent him from defending it," Enjolras answered.

Suddenly, between two discharges, the distant sound of a clock striking was heard.

" It is midday," said Combeferre.

The twelve strokes had not died out ere Enjolras drew himself up to his full height, and hurled the loud cry from the top of the barricade,—

" Take up paving-stones into the house, and line the windows with them. One half of you to the stones, the other half to the muskets. There is not a moment to lose."

A party of sappers, with their axes on their shoulders, had just appeared in battle-array at the end of the street. This could only be the head of a column : and of what column ? Evidently the column of attack ; for the sappers ordered to demolish the barricade always precede the troops told off to escalade it. It was plain that the moment was at hand which M. Clermont Tonnerre called in 1822 " the last attempt."

Enjolras's order was carried out with that correct speed peculiar to ships and barricades, the only two battle-fields whence escape is impossible. In less than a minute two-thirds of a heap of paving-stones which Enjolras had ordered to be piled up against the door of Corinth were carried to the first floor and attic, and before a second minute had passed these paving-stones, artistically laid on one another, walled up one half of the window. A few spaces carefully arranged by Feuilly, the chief constructor, allowed the gun barrels to pass through. This armament of the windows was the more easily effected because the grape-shot had ceased. The two cannon were now firing solid shot at the centre of the barricade, in order to make a hole, and if possible a breach, for the assault.

Then the ground-floor window was also barricaded, and the iron bars which closed the door at night were held in readiness. The fortress was complete, the barricade was the rampart, and the wineshop the keep. With the paving-stones left over the gap was stopped up. The preparations for the attack are always made with a certain methodical slowness, and after that comes the thunder. This slowness enabled Enjolras to revise and render everything perfect. He felt that since such men were about to die, their death must be a masterpiece. He said to Marius,—

"We are the two chiefs. I am going to give the final orders inside, while you remain outside and watch."

Marius posted himself in observation on the crest of the barricade, while Enjolras had the door of the kitchen, which it will be remembered served as an ambulance, nailed up.

"No spattering on the wounded," he said.

He gave his final instructions in the ground-floor room in a sharp but wonderfully calm voice, and Feuilly listened and answered in the name of all.

"Have axes ready on the first floor to cut down the stairs. Have you them?"

"Yes," Feuilly answered.

"How many?"

"Two axes and a crowbar."

"Very good. In all twenty-six fighting men left. How many guns are there?"

"Thirty-four."

"Eight too many. Keep those guns loaded like the others, and within reach. Place your sabres and pistols in your

belts. Twenty men to the barricade. Six will ambush themselves in the garret and at the first-floor window, to fire on the assailants through the loop-holes in the paving-stones. There must not be an idle workman here. Presently, when the drummer sounds the charge, the twenty men below will rush to the barricade, and the first to arrive will be the best placed."

These arrangements made, he turned to Javert, and said to him, "I have not forgotten you."

And laying a pistol on the table he added,—

"The last man to leave here will blow out this spy's brains."

"Here?" a voice answered.

"No, let us not have this corpse near ours. It is easy to stride over the small barricade in Mondétour Lane, as it is only four feet high. This man is securely bound, so lead him there and execute him."

Some one was at this moment even more stoical than Enjolras,—it was Javert. Here Jean Valjean appeared; he was mixed up with the group of insurgents, but stepped forward and said to Enjolras,

"Are you the Commandant?"

"Yes."

"You thanked me just now. Do you think that I deserve a reward?"

"Certainly."

"Well, then, I ask one."

"What is it?"

"To let me blow out that man's brains myself."

Javert raised his head, saw Jean Valjean, gave an imperceptible start, and said,—"It is fair."

As for Enjolras, he was reloading his gun. He looked around him.

"Is there no objection?"

And he turned to Jean Valjean.

"Take the spy."

Jean Valjean took possession of Javert by seating himself on the end of the table. He seized the pistol, and a faint clink showed that he had cocked it. Almost at the same moment the bugle-call was heard.

The insurgents rushed tumultuously forth, and as they passed, Javert smote them on the back, so to speak, with the expression, "We shall meet again soon."

So soon as Jean Valjean was alone with Javert, he undid the rope which fastened the prisoner round the waist, the knot of which was under the table. After this, he made him a signal to rise. Javert obeyed with that indefinable smile, in which the supremacy of enchained authority is condensed. Jean Vaejean seized Javert by the martingale, as he would have taken an ox by its halter, and dragging him after him, quitted the wine-shop slowly, for Javert, having his feet hobbled, could only take very short steps. Jean Valjean held the pistol in his hand, and they thus crossed the inner trapeze of the barricade; the insurgents, prepared for the imminent attack, turned their backs.

Marius alone, placed at the left extremity of the barricade, saw them pass. This group of the victim and his hangman was illumined by the sepulchral gleams which he had in his soul. Jean Valjean forced Javert to climb over the barricade with some difficulty, but did not loosen the cord. When they had crossed the bar, they found themselves alone in the lane, and no one could now see them, for the elbow formed by the houses hid them from the insurgents. The corpses removed from the barricade formed a horrible pile a few paces from them. Among the dead could be distinguished a livid face, dishevelled hair, a pierced hand, and a half-naked female bosom; it was Eponine. Javert looked askance at this dead girl, and said with profound calmness,—

"I fancy I know that girl."

Then he turned to Jean Valjean, who placed the pistol under his arm, and fixed on Javert a glance which had no need of words to say, "Javert, it is I."

Javert answered, "Take your revenge."

Jean Valjean took a knife from his pocket and opened it

"A clasp-knife," Javert exclaimed. "You are right, that suits you better."

Jean Valjean cut the martingale which Javert had round his neck, then he cut the ropes on his wrists, and stooping down, those on his feet; then rising again, he said, "You are free."

It was not easy to astonish Javert, still, master though he was of himself, he could not suppress his emotion; he stood gaping and motionless, while Jean Valjean continued,—

"I do not believe that I shall leave this place. Still if by accident I do, I live under the name of Fauchelevent, at No. 7 Rue de l'Homme Armé."

Javert gave a tigerish frown, which opened a corner of his mouth, and muttered between his teeth,—

"Take care."

"Begone," said Jean Valjean.

Javert added,

"You said Fauchelevent, Rue de l'Homme Armé?"

"No. 7."

Javert repeated in a low voice,—"No. 7."

He rebuttoned his frock-coat, restored his military stiffness between his shoulders, made a half-turn, crossed his arms while supporting his chin with one of his hands, and walked off in the direction of the Halles. Jean Valjean looked after him. After going a few yards Javert turned and said,—

"You annoy me. I would sooner be killed by you."

Javert did not even notice that he no longer addressed Jean Valjean in the second person singular.

"Begone," said Valjean.

Javert retired slowly, and a moment after turned the corner of the Rue des Prêcheurs. When Javert had disappeared, Jean Valjean discharged the pistol in the air, and then returned to the barricade, saying,—

"It is all over."

This is what had taken place in the meanwhile. Marius, more occupied with the outside than the inside, had not hitherto attentively regarded the spy fastened up at the darkened end of the ground-floor room. When he saw him in the open day-light bestriding the barricade, he recognized him, and a sudden hope entered his mind. He remembered the inspector of the Rue de Pontoise, and the two pistols he had given him, which he, Marius, had employed at this very barricade, and he not only remembered his face but his name.

This recollection, however, was foggy and disturbed, like all his ideas. It was not an affirmation he made so much as a question which he asked himself. "Is that not the Police Inspector, who told me that his name was Javert?" Marius shouted to Enjolras, who had just stationed himself at the other end of the barricade,—

"Enjolras?"

"Well?"

"What is that man's name?"

"Which man?"

"The police agent. Do you know his name?
"Of course I do, for he told it to us."
"What is it?"
"Javert."

Marius started, but at this moment a pistol-shot was heard, and Jean Valjean reappeared, saying, "It is all over." A dark chill crossed Marius's heart.

Suddenly the drum beat the charge, and the attack was a hurricane. A powerful column of line infantry, intersected at regular intervals by National Guards and dismounted Municipal Guards, and supported by heavy masses, that could be heard if not seen, debouched into the street at the double, with drums beating, bugles braying, bayonets levelled, and sappers in front, and imperturbable under the shower of projectiles dashed straight at the barricade with all the weight of a bronze battering-ram. But the wall held out firmly, and the insurgents fired impetuously; the escaladed barricade displayed a flashing mane. The attack was so violent that it was in a moment inundated by assailants; but it shook off the soldiers as the lion does the dogs, and it was only covered with besiegers as the cliff is with foam, to reappear a minute later scarped, black, and formidable.

The assaults succeeded each other, and the horror became constantly greater. These sallow, ragged, and exhausted men, who had not eaten for four-and-twenty hours, who had not slept, who had only a few rounds more to fire, who felt their empty pockets for cartridges—these men nearly all wounded, with head or arm bound round with a blood-stained blackish rag, having holes in their coat from which the blood flew, scarce armed with bad guns and old rusty sabres, became Titans. The barricade was ten times approached, assaulted, escaladed, and never captured. They fought foot to foot, body to body, with pistol-shots, sabre-cuts, and fists, close by, at a distance, above, below, on all sides, from the roof of the house, from the wine-shop, and even from the traps of the cellars into which some had slipped. The odds were sixty to one, and the frontage of Corinth half demolished was hideous. The window, pock-marked with grape-shot, had lost glass and frame, and was only a shapeless hole, tumultuously stopped up with paving-stones. Bossuet was killed, Feuilly was killed, Courfeyrac was killed, Joly was killed. Combeferre, traversed by three

bayonet stabs in the breast at the moment when he was raising a wounded soldier, had only time to look up to heaven, and expired. Marius, still fighting, had received so many wounds, especially in the head, that his face disappeared in blood and looked as if it were covered by a red handkerchief. Enjolras alone was not wounded; when he had no weapon he held out his arm to right or left, and an insurgent placed some instrument in his hand.

When there were no chiefs left but Enjolras and Marius at the two ends of the barricade, the centre, which had so long been supported by Courfeyrac, Bossuet, Joly, Feuilly, and Combeferre, yielded. A final assault was attempted, and this assault was successful; the bristling mass of bayonets, hurled forward at a run, came up irresistibly, and the dense line of the attacking column appeared in the smoke on the top of the scarp. This time it was all over, and the band of insurgents defending the centre recoiled pell-mell.

Then the gloomy love of life was rekindled in some; covered by this forest of muskets, several did not wish to die. They were drawn up against the six-storeyed house at the back of the barricade, and this house might be their salvation. This house was barricaded, as it were walled up from top to bottom, but before the troops reached the interior of the redoubt, a door would have time to open and shut, and it would be life for these desperate men, for at the back of this house were streets, possible flight, and space. They began kicking and knocking at the door, while calling, crying, imploring, and clasping their hands. But no one opened. Enjolras shouted to the soldiers, Do not advance, and as an officer declined to obey he killed the officer. He was in the inner yard of the redoubt, close to Corinth, with his sword in one hand and carbine in the other, holding open the door of the wine-shop, which he barred against the assailants. He shouted to the desperate men, "There is only one door open, and it is this one," and covering them with his person, and alone facing a battalion, he made them pass behind him. All rushed in, and Enjolras, whirling his musket round his head, drove back the bayonets and entered the last, and there was a frightful moment, during which the troops tried to enter, and the insurgents to bar the door. The latter was closed with such violence that the five fingers of a soldier who had caught hold

of the door-post were cut off clean, and remained in the crevice. Marius remained outside; a bullet broke his collar-bone, and he felt himself fainting and falling. At this moment, when his eyes were already closed, he felt the shock of a powerful hand seizing him, and his fainting-fit scarce left him time for this thought, blended with the supreme recollection of Cosette, "I am made prisoner and shall be shot."

Enjolras, not seeing Marius among those who had sought shelter in the house, had the same idea, but they had reached that moment when each could only think of his own death. Enjolras put the bar on the door, bolted and locked it, while the soldiers beat it with musket-butts, and the sappers attacked it with their axes outside. The assailants were grouped round this door, and the siege of the wine-shop now began.

The barricade had resisted like a gate of Thebes, and the wine-shop resisted like a house of Saragossa. Nothing was wanting in the attack on it, neither paving-stones showering from the window and roof on the assailants, and exasperating the troops by the frightful damage they committed, nor shots from the attics and cellar, nor the fury of the attack, nor the rage of the defence, nor, finally, when the door gave way, the frenzied mania of extermination. When the assailants rushed into the wine-shop, their feet entangled in the panels of the broken door which lay on the ground, they did not find a single combatant. The winding staircase, cut away with axes, lay in the middle of the ground-floor room, a few wounded men were on the point of dying, all who were not killed were on the first-floor, and a terrific fire was discharged thence through the hole in the ceiling which had been the entrance to the restaurant. These were the last cartridges, and when they were expended and nobody had any powder or balls left, each man took up two of the bottles reserved by Enjolras, and defended the stairs with these frightfully fragile weapons. They were bottles of aqua-fortis. We describe the gloomy things of carnage exactly as they are: the besieged makes a weapon of everything. Greek fire did not dishonour Archimedes, boiling pitch did not dishonour Bayard; every war is a horror, and there is no choice. The musketry fire of the assailants, though impeded and discharged from below, was murderous; and the brink of the hole was soon lined with dead heads, whence dripped long red and steaming jets. The noise was indescribable. and a compressed

burning smoke almost threw night over the combat. Words fail to describe horror when it has reached this stage. There were no men in this now infernal struggle, they were no longer giants contending against Titans. It resembled Milton and Dante more than Homer, for demons attacked and spectres resisted. It was a monster heroism.

At length, by employing the skeleton of the staircase, by climbing up the walls, clinging to the ceiling, and killing on the very edge of the trap the last who resisted, some twenty assailants, soldiers, National and Municipal Guards, mostly disfigured by wounds in the face received in this formidable ascent, blinded by blood, furious and savage, burst into the first-floor room. There was only one man standing there — Enjolras; without cartridges or sword, he only held in his hand the barrel of his carbine, whose butt he had broken on the heads of those who entered. He had placed the billiard-table between himself and his assailants, he had fallen back to the end of the room, and there, with flashing eye and head erect, holding the piece of a weapon in his hand, he was still sufficiently alarming for a space to be formed round him. A cry was raised,—"It is the chief; it was he who killed the artilleryman; as he has placed himself there, we will let him remain there. Shoot him on the spot."

"Shoot me," Enjolras said.

And, throwing away his weapon and folding his arms, he offered his chest. Then a serjeant shouted, "Present."

An officer interposed.

"Wait a minute."

And addressing Enjolras,—

"Do you wish to have your eyes bandaged?"

"No."

"It was really you who killed the sergeant of artillery?"

"Yes."

The detonation took place. Enjolras, traversed by eight bullets, remained leaning against the wall, as if nailed to it; he merely hung his head. A few minutes later the soldiers dislodged the last insurgents who had taken refuge at the top of the house, and were firing through a partition in the garret. They fought desperately, and threw bodies out of windows, some still alive. There was a similar struggle in the cellar; cries, shots, and a fierce clashing; then silence. The barri-

cade was captured, and the soldiers began searching the adjacent houses and pursuing the fugitives.

CHAPTER XXIII

MARIUS was really a prisoner, prisoner to Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean had taken no other part in the struggle than that of exposing himself. He did not appear to see Marius in the thick of the combat, but in truth he did not take his eyes off him. When a bullet laid Marius low Jean Valjean leaped upon him with the agility of a tiger, dashed upon him as on a prey, and carried him off.

The whirlwind of the attack was at this moment so violently concentrated on Enjolras and the door of the wine-shop that no one saw Jean Valjean, supporting the fainting Marius in his arms, cross the unpaved ground of the barricade, and disappear round the corner of Corinth. Here Jean Valjean stopped, let Marius slip to the ground, leant against a wall, and looked around him.

The situation was frightful; for the instant, for two or three minutes perhaps, this piece of wall was a shelter, but how to get out of this massacre? He had in front of him that implacable and silent six-storeyed house, which only seemed inhabited by the dead man leaning out of his window; he had on his right the low barricade which closed the Petite Truanderie; to climb over this obstacle appeared easy, but a row of bayonet-points could be seen over the crest of the barricade. It was evident that crossing the barricade was seeking a platoon fire, and that any head which appeared above the wall of paving-stones would serve as a mark for sixty muskets.

What was he to do? A bird alone could have escaped from this place. And he must decide at once, find an expedient, and make up his mind. Jean Valjean looked at the house opposite to him, he looked at the barricade by his side, and then looked on the ground, with the violence of supreme extremity, wildly, and as if he would have liked to dig a hole with his eyes. By force of looking, something vaguely discernible in such an agony was designed and assumed a shape at his feet, as if the eyes had the power to produce the thing demanded. He perceived a few paces from him, at the foot of the small barricade so pitilessly guarded and watched from without, and beneath

a pile of paving-stones which almost concealed it, an iron grating, laid flat and flush with the ground. This grating, made of strong cross-bars, was about two feet square, and the framework of paving-stones which supported it had been torn out, and it was as it were dismounted. Through the bars a glimpse could be caught of an obscure opening, something like a chimney-pot or the cylinder of cistern. Jean Valjean dashed up, and his old skill in escapes rose to his brain like a beam of light. To remove the paving-stones, tear up the grating, take Marius, who was inert as a dead body, on his shoulders, descend with this burden on his loins, helping himself with his elbows and knees, into this sort of well which was fortunately of no great depth, to let the grating fall again over his head, to set foot on a paved surface, about ten feet below the earth, all this was executed like something done in delirium, with a giant's strength and the rapidity of an eagle : this occupied but a few minutes. Jean Valjean found himself with the still fainting Marius in a sort of long subterranean corridor, where there was profound peace, absolute silence, and night.

If we imagine Paris removed like a cover, the subterranean net-work of drains regarded from a bird's-eye view, would represent on either bank a sort of large branch grafted upon the river. On the right bank the encircling sewer will be the trunk of this branch, the secondary tubes the branches, and the blind alleys the twigs. This figure is only summary and half correct, as the right angle, which is the usual angle in subterranean ramifications of this nature, is very rare in vegetation. Our readers will form a better likeness of this strange geometric plan by supposing that they see lying on a bed of darkness some strange Oriental alphabet as confused as a thicket, and whose shapeless letters are welded to each other in an apparent confusion, and as if accidentally, here by their angles and there by their ends.

It was in the sewer of Paris that Jean Valjean found himself. He stood for some minutes as if stunned, listening and amazed. The trap-door of safety had suddenly opened beneath him, and the heavenly kindness had to some extent snared him, by treachery. Still the wounded man did not stir, and Jean Valjean did not know whether what he was carrying in this fosse were alive or dead.

His first sensation was blindness, for he all at once could see

nothing. He felt too that in a moment he had become deaf, for he could hear nothing more. He felt that he had something solid under his feet, but that was all ; still it was sufficient. He stretched out one arm, then the other ; he touched the wall on both sides, and understood that the passage was narrow ; his foot slipped, and he understood that the pavement was damp. He advanced one foot cautiously, fearing a hole, a cesspool, or some gulf, and satisfied himself that the pavement went onwards. A fetid gust warned him of the spot where he was. At the expiration of a few minutes he was no longer blind, a little light fell through the trap by which he had descended, and his eye grew used to this cellar. He began to distinguish something. The passage in which he had run to earth was walled up behind him ; it was one of those blind alleys called in the special language branches. Before him he had another wall, a wall of night. The light of the trap expired ten or twelve feet from the spot where Jean Valjean was, and scarce produced a livid whiteness on a few yards of the damp wall of the sewer. Jean Valjean thought that the grating which he had noticed in the street might also be noticed by the troops, and that all depended on chance. They might also come down into the well and search, so he had not a minute to lose. He resolutely entered the darkness.

When he had gone fifty yards he was obliged to stop, for a question occurred to him ; the passage ran into another, which it intersected, and two roads offered themselves. Which should he take ? ought he to turn to the left or right ? how was he to find his way in this black labyrinth ? This labyrinth, he thought, must have a clue in its slope, and following the slope must lead to the river. Jean Valjean understood this immediately ; he said to himself that he was probably in the sewer of the Halles, that if he turned to the left and followed the incline he would arrive in a quarter of an hour at some opening on the Seine between the Pont au Change and the Pont Neuf, that is to say, appear in broad daylight in the busiest part of Paris. Perhaps he might come out at some street opening, and passers-by would be stupefied at seeing two blood-stained men emerge from the ground at their feet. The police would come up, and they would be carried off to the nearest guard-room ; they would be prisoners before they had come out. It would be better, therefore, to bury himself in the laby-

rinth, confide in the darkness, and leave the issue to Providence.

To direct himself was difficult, for the sewers represent, so to speak, the outline of the streets standing over them. There were in the Paris of that day two thousand two hundred streets, and imagine beneath them that forest of dark branches called the sewer. The system of drains existing at that day, if placed end on end, would have given a length of eleven leagues. He advanced anxiously, but calmly, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, plunged into chance, that is to say, swallowed up in Providence. By degrees, however, we are bound to state that a certain amount of horror beset him, and the shadow which enveloped him entered his mind. Jean Valjean was obliged to find, and almost invent, his road without seeing it. In this unknown region each step that he ventured might be his last. How was he to get out of it? could he pierce and penetrate this colossal subterranean sponge with its passages of stone? would he meet there some unexpected knot of darkness? would Marius die of hemorrhage, and himself of hunger? would they both end by being lost there, and form two skeletons in a corner of this night? He did not know; he asked himself all this, and could not find an answer.

He suddenly had a surprise; at the most unexpected moment, and without ceasing to walk in a straight line, he perceived that he was no longer ascending; the water of the gutter plashed against his heels instead of coming to his toes. The sewer was now descending; why? was he about to reach the Seine suddenly? That danger was great, but the peril of turning back was greater still, and he continued to advance.

He had been walking about half an hour, at least that was the calculation he made, and had not thought of resting; he had merely changed the hand which held Marius up. The darkness was more profound than ever, but this darkness reassured him. All at once he saw his shadow before him; it stood out upon a faint and almost indistinct redness, which vaguely impurpled the roadway at his feet and the vault above his head, and glided along the greasy walls of the passage. He turned his head in stupefaction, and saw behind him at a distance, which appeared immense, a sort of horrible star glistening, which seemed to be looking at him. It was the gloomy police star rising in the sewer. Behind this star there moved confusedly nine or ten black, upright, indistinct, and terrible forms.

The meaning was as follows: on the day of June 6th a battue of the sewers was ordered, for it was feared lest the conquered should fly to them as a refuge, and Prefect Gisquet ordered occult Paris to be searched, while General Bugeaud swept public Paris. Three squads of agents and sewer-men explored the subway of Paris, the first the right bank, the second the left bank, and the third the Cité. The agents were armed with carbines, bludgeons, swords, and daggers, and what was at this moment pointed at Jean Valjean was the lantern of the round of the right bank. While the police were carrying their light about there, Jean Valjean in his progress came to the entrance of the gallery, found it narrower than the main gallery, and had not entered it. The police, on coming out of the Cadran gallery, fancied that they could hear the sound of footsteps in the direction of the outer drain, and they were really Jean Valjean's footsteps. The head serjeant of the round raised his lantern, and the squad began peering into the mist in the direction whence the noise had come.

It was an indescribable moment for Jean Valjean; luckily, if he saw the lantern well, the lantern saw him badly, for it was the light and he was the darkness. He was too far off, and blended with the blackness of the spot, so he drew himself up against the wall and stopped. When Jean Valjean stopped the noise ceased; the police listened and heard nothing, they looked and saw nothing, and hence consulted together. There was at that period at that point in the Montmartre drain a sort of square called *de service*, which has since been suppressed, owing to the small internal lake which the torrents of rain formed there, and the squad assembled on this square. Jean Valjean saw them make a sort of circle, and then bull-dog heads came together and whispered. The result of this council held by the watch-dogs was that they were mistaken, that there had been no noise, that there was nobody there, that it was useless to enter the surrounding sewer, that it would be time wasted, but that they must hasten to the St. Merry drain, for if there were anything to be done, and any "boussingot" to track, it would be there.

Before starting, the serjeant, to satisfy his police conscience, discharged his carbine in the direction where Jean Valjean was. The detonation rolled echoing along the crypt, like the rumbling of these Titanic bowels. A piece of plaster which fell into the gutter and plashed up the water a few yards

from Jean Valjean warned him that the bullet had struck the vault above his head. Measured and slow steps echoed for some time along the wooden causeway, growing more and more deadened by the growing distance; the group of black forms disappeared; a light oscillated and floated, forming on the vault a ruddy circle, which decreased and disappeared; the silence again became profound, the obscurity again became complete, blindness and deafness again took possession of the gloom, and Jean Valjean, not daring yet to stir, remained leaning for a long time against the wall, with outstretched ear and dilated eyeballs, watching the evanishment of the patrol of phantoms.

Jean Valjean then resumed his march, and did not stop again. The intermittent flashes of the street gratings only appeared at lengthened intervals, and were so faint that the bright sunshine seemed to be moonlight; all the rest was fog, miasma, opaqueness, and blackness. Jean Valjean was hungry and thirsty, the latter most, and it was like the sea, there was water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink. His strength, which, as we know, was prodigious, and but slightly diminished by age, owing to his chaste and sober life, was, however, beginning to give way; fatigue assailed him, and his decreasing strength increased the weight of his burden. Marius, who was perhaps dead, was heavy, like all inert bodies, but Jean Valjean held him so that his chest was not affected, and he could breathe with pressure. He felt between his legs the rapid gliding of rats, and one was so startled as to bite him. From time to time a gush of fresh air came through the gratings, which revived him.

It might be about three P. M. when he reached the external sewer, and was at first amazed at the sudden widening. He unexpectedly found himself in a gallery whose two walls his outstretched arms did not reach, and under an arch which his head did not touch. The grand sewer, in fact, is eight feet in width by seven high. At the point where the Montmartre drain joins the grand sewer two other subterranean galleries, that of the Rue de Provence and that of the Abattoir, form cross roads. Between these four ways a less sagacious man would have been undecided, but Jean Valjean selected the widest, that is to say, the encircling sewer. But here the question came back again,—Should he ascend or descend? He thought that the situation was pressing, and that he must at

all risks now reach the Seine, in other words, descend, so he turned to the left.

His instinct served him well; going down, in fact, was the only salvation possible. A little beyond an affluent, which was probably the Madeleine branch, he stopped, for he was very weary. A large grating, probably the one in the Rue d'Anjou, produced an almost bright light. Jean Valjean, with the gentle movements which a brother would bestow on a wounded brother, laid Marius on the *banquette* of the drain, and his white face gleamed under the white light of the trap as from the bottom of a tomb. His eyes were closed, his hair was attached to his forehead like pincers dried in blood, his hands were hanging and dead, his limbs cold, and blood was clotted at the corner of his lips. Coagulated blood had collected in his cravat knot, his shirt entered the wounds, and the cloth of his coat rubbed the gaping edges of the quivering flesh. Jean Valjean removing the clothes with the tips of his fingers, laid his hand on his chest,— the heart still beat. Jean Valjean tore up his shirt, bandaged the wounds as well as he could, and stopped the blood that was flowing; then, stooping down in this half daylight over Marius, who was still unconscious and almost breathless, he looked at him with indescribable hatred. In moving Marius's clothes he found in his pockets two things, the loaf, which he had forgotten the previous evening, and his pocket-book. He ate the bread and opened the pocket-book. On the first page he read the lines written by Marius, as will be remembered: "My name is Marius Pontmercy, carry my body to my grandfather's, M. Gillenormand, No. 6, Rue des Filles du Calvaire, in the Marais."

Jean Valjean read by the light of the grating these lines, and remained for a time as it were absorbed in himself, and repeating in a low voice, M. Gillenormand, No. 6, Rue des Filles du Calvaire. He returned the portfolio to Marius's pocket; he had eaten, and his strength had come back to him. He raised Marius again, carefully laid his head on his right shoulder, and began descending the sewer. Nothing informed him what zone of the city he was traversing, nor what distance he had gone, still the growing paleness of the flakes of light which he met from time to time indicated to him that the sun was retiring from the pavement, and that day would be soon ended; and the rolling of vehicles over his head, which had

become intermittent instead of continuous, and then almost ceased, proved to him that he was no longer under central Paris, and was approaching some solitary region, near the external boulevards or most distant quays, where there are fewer houses and streets, and the drain has few gratings. The obscurity thickened around Jean Valjean; still he continued to advance, groping his way in the shadow.

This shadow suddenly became terrible.

He felt that he was entering water, and that he had under his feet no longer stone but mud.

Before the important works begun in 1833, the sub-way of Paris was subject to sudden breakings-in. The water filtered through a subjacent and peculiarly friable soil; and the roadway, if made of paving-stones, as in the old drains, or of concrete upon beton, as in the new galleries, having no support, bent. A bend in a planking of this nature is a crevice, and a crevice is a bursting in. The roadway broke away for a certain length, and such a gap, a gulf of mud, was called in the special language *fontis*. What is a fontis. It is the quick sand of the sea-shore suddenly met with under-ground; it is the quicksand of St. Michel in a sewer. The moistened soil is in a state of fusion, all its particles are held in suspense in a shifting medium; it is not land, and it is not water. The depth is at times very great. Nothing can be more formidable than meeting with such a thing; if water predominate, death is quick, for a man is drowned, if earth predominate, death is slow, for he is sucked down.

Can our readers imagine such a death? If it be frightful to sink in a quicksand on the sea-shore, what is it in a cloaca? Slow asphyxia by uncleanliness, a sarcophagus where asphyxia opens its claws in the filth, and clutches you by the throat.

Inexpressible the horror of dying thus! Death sometimes expiates its atrocity by a certain terrible dignity. On the pyre, in shipwreck, a man may be great; in the flames, as in the foam, a superb attitude is possible, and a man transfigures himself. But in this case it is not so; for the death is unclean. It is humiliating to expire in such a way, and the last floating visions are abject.

The depth of the fontis varied, as did their length and density, according to the nature of the sub-soil. At times a fontis was three or four feet deep, at times eight or ten, and sometimes it was bottomless. In one the mud was almost solid, in

another nearly liquid. In the Lunière fontis, a man would have taken a day in disappearing, while he would have been devoured in five minutes by the Phélippeaux slough.

Jean Valjean found himself in presence of a slough of mud in a cavern of night. He felt the pavement depart from under him as he entered the slough; there was water at top and mud underneath. He must pass it, for it was impossible to turn back; Marius was dying, and Jean Valjean worn out. Where else could he go? Jean Valjean advanced; the slough appeared but of slight depth at the first few steps, but as he advanced his legs sank in. He soon had mud up to the middle of the leg, and water up to the middle of the knee. He walked along, raising Marius with both arms as high as he could above the surface of the water; the mud now came up to his knees and the water to his waist. He could no longer draw back and he sank in deeper and deeper. This mud, dense enough for the weight of one man, could not evidently bear two. The water came up to his arm-pits, and he felt himself drowning; he could scarce move in the depth of mud in which he was standing, for the density which was the support was also the obstacle. He still kept Marius up, and advanced with an extraordinary expenditure of strength, but he was sinking. He had only his head out of water, and his two arms sustaining Marius. As he still sank he threw back his face to escape the water and be able to breathe; any one who saw him in this darkness would have fancied he saw a mask floating on the gloomy waters; he vaguely perceived above him Marius's hanging head and livid face; he made a desperate effort, and advanced his foot, which struck against something solid, a resting-place. It was high time.

He drew himself up, and writhed and rooted himself with a species of fury upon this support. It produced on him the effect of the first step of a staircase re-ascending to life. This support met with in the mud, at the supreme moment, was the beginning of the other side of the roadway, which had fallen in without breaking, and bent under the water like a plank in a single piece. A well-constructed pavement forms a curve, and possesses such firmness. This fragment of roadway, partly submerged, but solid, was a real incline, and once upon it they were saved. Jean Valjean ascended it, and attained the other side of the slough. On leaving the water his foot caught

against a stone, and he fell on his knees. He found that this was just, and remained on them for some time, with his soul absorbed in words addressed to GOD. He rose, shivering, chilled, bent beneath the dying man he carried, dripping with filth, but with his soul full of strange brightness.

He set out once again; still, if he had not left his life in the fontis he seemed to have left his strength there. This supreme effort had exhausted him, and his fatigue was now so great that he was obliged to rest every three or four paces to take breath, and leant against the wall. Once he was obliged to sit down on the banquette in order to alter Marius's position, and believed that he should remain there. But if his vigour were dead, his energy was not so, and he rose again. He walked desperately, almost quickly, went thus one hundred yards without raising his head, almost without breathing, and all at once ran against the wall. He had reached an elbow of the drain, and on arriving head down at the turning came against the wall. He raised his eyes, and at the end of the passage down there, far, very far away, perceived a light. But this time it was no terrible light, but white, fair light. It was daylight. Jean Valjean saw the outlet. A condemned soul that suddenly saw from the middle of the furnace the issue from Gehenna would feel what Jean Valjean felt. Jean-Valjean no longer felt fatigue, he no longer felt Marius's weight, he found again his muscles of steel, and ran rather than walked. As he drew nearer, the outlet became more distinctly designed; it was an arch, not so tall as the roof, which gradually contracted, and not so wide as the gallery, which grew narrower at the same time as the roof became lowered. The tunnel finished inside in the shape of a funnel, a faulty reduction, imitated from the wickets of houses of correction, logical in a prison, but illogical in a drain, and which has since been corrected.

Jean Valjean reached the issue, and then stopped; it was certainly the outlet, but they could not get out. The arch was closed by a strong grating, and this grating, which apparently rarely turned on its oxydized hinges, was fastened to the stone wall by a heavy lock, which, red with rust, seemed an enormous brick. The key-hole was visible, as well as the bolt deeply plunged into its iron-box. It was one of those Bastille locks of which ancient Paris was so prodigal. Beyond

the grating were the open air, the river, daylight, the bank very narrow, but sufficient to depart, the distant quays, Paris, that gulf in which a man hides himself so easily, the wide horizon, and liberty. On the right could be distinguished, down the river, the Pont de Jena, and up it the Pont des Invalides; the spot would have been a favourable one to await night and escape. It was one of the most solitary points in Paris. Jean Valjean laid Marius along the wall, and seized the bars with both hands, but the grating did not stir. What would become of him? He had not the strength to turn back and recommence the frightful journey which he had already made. Moreover, how was he to cross again that slough from which he had only escaped by a miracle?

It was all over, and all that Jean Valjean had done was useless: GOD opposed it. They were both caught in the dark and immense web of death, and Jean Valjean felt the fearful spider already running along the black threads in the darkness. He turned his back to the grating and fell on the pavement near Marius, who was still motionless, and whose head had fallen between his knees. There was no outlet, that was the last drop of agony. Of whom did he think in this profound despondency? Neither of himself nor of Marius! Of Cossette. In the midst of his annihilation a hand was laid on his shoulder, and a low voice said,—

"Half shares."

Jean Valjean fancied that he was dreaming. He had not heard a footstep. Was it possible? He raised his eyes, and a man was standing before him. This man was dressed in a blouse, his feet were naked, and he held his shoes in his hand; he had evidently taken them off in order to be able to reach Jean Valjean without letting his footsteps be heard. Jean Valjean had not a moment's hesitation; however unexpected the meeting might be, the man was known to him—it was Thénardier. Although, so to speak, aroused with a start, Jean Valjean, accustomed to alarms and to unexpected blows, which it is necessary to parry quickly, at once regained possession of all his presence of mind. Thénardier, raising his right hand to the level of his forehead, made a screen of it; then he drew his eyebrows together with a wink, which, with a slight pinching of the lips, characterizes the sagacious attention of a man who is striving to recognize another. He did

not succeed. Jean Valjean was turning his back to the light, and was besides so disfigured, so filthy and blood-stained, that he could not have been recognized in broad daylight. On the other hand, Thénardier, with his face lit up by the light from the grating, a cellar brightness, it is true, livid, but precise in its lividness, leapt at once into Jean Valjean's eyes, to employ the energetic popular metaphor. This inequality of conditions sufficed to insure some advantage to Jean Valjean in the mysterious duel which was about to begin between the two situations and the two men. The meeting took place between Jean Valjean masked and Thénardier unmasked. Jean Valjean at once perceived that Thénardier did not recognize him; and they looked at each other silently in this gloom, as if taking one another's measure. Thénardier was the first to break the silence.

"How do you mean to get out?"

Jean Valjean not replying, Thénardier continued,—"It is impossible to pick the lock; and yet you must get out of here."

"That is true," said Jean Valjean.

"Well, then, half shares."

"What do you mean?"

"You have killed the man, very good, and I have the key."

Thénardier pointed to Marius, and continued,—"I do not know you, but you must be a friend, and I wish to help you."

Jean Valjean began to understand. Thénardier took him for an assassin. The latter continued: "Listen, mate, you did not kill this man without looking to see what he had in his pockets. Give me my half, and I open the gate."

And half drawing a heavy key from under his ragged blouse, he added,—

"Would you like to see how the key is made? look here."

Jean Valjean was so astounded that he doubted whether what he saw was real. It was Providence appearing in a horrible form, and the good angel issuing from the ground in the shape of Thénardier. The latter thrust his hand into a wide pocket hidden under his blouse, drew out a rope, and handed it to Jean Valjean.

"There," he said, "I give you the rope into the bargain."

"What am I to do with the rope?"

"You also want a stone, but you will find that outside, as there is a heap of them."

"What am I to do with a stone?"

"Why, you ass, as you are going to throw the cove into the river you want a rope and a stone, or else the body will float on the water."

Jean Valjean took the rope mechanically.

"And now let's settle our business. You have seen my key, so show me your money."

Jean Valjean felt in his pockets. It was, as will be remembered, always his rule to have money about him, for the gloomy life of experiments to which he was condemned rendered it a law for him. This time, however, he was unprovided. In putting on upon the previous evening his National Guard uniform, he forget, mournfully absorbed as he was, to take out his pocket-book, and he had only some change in his waistcoat-pocket. He turned out his pocket, which was saturated with slime, and laid on the banquette a louis d'or- two five-franc pieces, and five or six double sous, Thénardier thrust out his lower lip with a significant twist of the neck.

"You did not kill him for much," he said.

He then began most familiarly feeling in Jean Valjean and Marius's pockets, and Jean Valjean, who was most anxious to keep his back to the light, allowed him to do so. While feeling in Marius's coat, Thénardier, with the dexterity of a conjuror, managed to tear off, without Jean Valjean perceiving the fact, a strip, which he concealed under his blouse; probably thinking that this piece of cloth might help him to recognize hereafter the assassinated man and the assassin. However, he found no more than the thirty francs.

"It is true," he said; "one with the other, you have no more than that."

And forgetting his phrase half-shares, he took all.

"Now, my friend, you must be off. It is here as at the fairs; you pay when you go out. You have paid, so you can go."

Thénardier helped Jean Valjean to replace Marius on his back, and then proceeded to the grating on the tips of his naked feet. After making Jean Valjean a sign to follow him, he placed his finger on his lip, and remained for some seconds as if in suspense; but when the inspection was over he put the key in the lock. The bolt slid, and the gate turned on its hinges without either grinding or creaking. It was plain that this grating and these hinges, carefully oiled, opened more

frequently than might be supposed. This gentleness was ill-omened; it spoke of furtive comings and goings, of the mysterious entrances and exits of night-men, and the crafty footfall of crime. The sewer was evidently an accomplice of some dark band, and this taciturn grating was a receiver. Thénardier held the door ajar, left just room for Jean Valjean to pass, relocked the gate, and plunged back into the darkness, making no more noise than a breath; he seemed to walk with the velvety pads of a tiger. A moment later this hideous providence had disappeared, and Jean Valjean was outside.

He let Marius slip down on the bank. They were outside; the miasma, the darkness, the horror, were behind him. Night unfolded over Jean Valjean's head all the sweetness of infinitude. Jean Valjean could not refrain from contemplating the vast clear obscure which he had above him, and pensively took a bath of ecstasy and prayer in the majestic silence of the eternal heavens. Then, as if the feeling of duty returned to him, he eagerly bent down over Marius, and lifting some water in the hollow of his hand, softly threw a few drops in his face. Marius's eyelids did not move, but he still breathed through his parted lips. Jean Valjean was again about to plunge his hand into the river, when he suddenly felt some annoyance, as when we feel there is some one behind us, though we cannot see him. He turned round, and there was really some one behind him, as there had been just before.

A man of tall stature, dressed in a long coat, with folded arms, and carrying in his right hand a cudgel, whose leaden knob could be seen, was standing a few paces behind Jean Valjean, who was leaning over Marius. Jean Valjean recognized Javert, who, as it happened, had been this night on the track of Thénardier, and had inexplicably lost him at this very spot.

Jean Valjean had passed from one rock to another; these two meetings one upon the other, falling from Thénardier on Javert, were rude. Javert did not recognize Jean Valjean, who, as we have said, no longer resembled himself. He did not unfold his arms, but secured his grasp of his bludgeon by an imperceptible movement, and said, in a sharp, calm voice,—

"Who are you?"

"I am Jean Valjean."

Javert placed his cudgel between his teeth, bent his knees, bowed his back, laid two powerful hands on Jean Valjean's

shoulders, which they held as in two vices, examined, and recognized him. Their faces almost touched, and Javert's glance was terrific. Jean Valjean remained inert under Javert's gripe, like a lion enduring the claw of a lynx.

"Inspector Javert," he said, "you have me. Besides, since this morning I have considered myself your prisoner. I did not give you my address in order to try and escape you. Take me, but grant me one thing."

Javert did not seem to hear, but kept his eye-balls fixed on Jean Valjean. His wrinkled chin thrust up his lips towards his nose, a sign of stern reverie. At length he loosed his hold of Jean Valjean, drew himself up, clutched his cudgel, and as if in a dream, muttered rather than asked this question,—

"What are you doing here? and who is that man?"

Jean Valjean replied, and the sound of his voice seemed to awaken Javert: "It is of him that I wished to speak. Do with me as you please, but help me first to carry him home. I only ask this of you."

Javert's face was contracted in the same way as it always was when any one believed him capable of a concession; still he did not say no. He stopped, took from his pocket a handkerchief, which he dipped in the water, and wiped Marius's ensanguined forehead.

"This man was at the barricade," he said in a low voice, and as if speaking to himself; "he was the one whom they called Marius."

"He is wounded," said Jean Valjean.

"He is a dead man," said Javert.

Jean Valjean replied: "No; not yet."

"Then you brought him from the barricade here?" Javert observed.

His preoccupation must have been great for him not to dwell on this alarming escape through the sewers, and not even remark Jean Valjean's silence after his question. Jean Valjean, on his side, seemed to have a sole thought; he continued: "He lives in the Marais, in the Rue des Filles du Calvaire, with his grandfather. I do not know his name."

Jean Valjean felt in Marius's pocket, took out the portfolio, opened it at the page on which Marius had written in pencil, and offered it to Javert. There was still sufficient floating light in the air to be able to read, and Javert, besides,

had in his eyes the feline phosphorescence of night birds. He deciphered the few lines written by Marius, and growled, "Gillenormand, No. 6, Rue des Filles du Calvaire." Then he cried, "Driver!"

This was addressed to a coachman who was waiting above for Javert in case of need. A moment after the hackney which he drove was on the bank. Marius was deposited on the back seat, and Javert sat down by Jean Valjean's side on the front one. When the door was closed the fiacre started off rapidly along the quays in the direction of the Bastille. They quitted the quay and turned into the street; and the driver, a black outline on his seat, lashed his lean horses.

There was an icy silence in the hackney-coach; Marius motionless, with his body reclining in one corner, his head on his chest, his arms pendent, and his legs stiff, appeared to be only waiting for a coffin. Jean Valjean seemed made of gloom, and Javert of stone; and in this fiacre full of night, whose interior, each time that it passed a lamp, seemed to be lividly lit up as if by an intermittent flash, accident united and appeared to confront the three immobilities of tragedy,—the corpse, the spectre, and the statue.

At each jolt over the pavement a drop of blood fell from Marius's hair. It was quite night when the hackney-coach reached No. 6, Rue des Filles du Calvaire. Javert got out first, examined at a glance the number over the gateway, and raising the heavy knocker of hammered steel, stamped in the old style with a goat and a satyr contending, gave a violent knock. The folding-door opened slightly, and Javert pushed it open. The porter half showed himself, yawning, and scarce awake, candle in hand. Javert addressed the porter in the tone which becomes the Government in the presence of the porter of a factious man.

"Any one live here of the name of Gillenormand?"

"It is here. What do you want with him?"

"We have brought home his son."

"His son?" the porter asked in amazement.

"He is dead." The porter not seeming to comprehend, Javert added, "He has been to the barricade, and here he is. Go and wake his father."

The porter did not stir.

"Be off!" Javert continued. "There will be a funeral here to-morrow."

The porter limited himself to awakening Basque; Basque awoke Nicolette; Nicolette awoke Aunt Gillenormand. As for the grandfather, he was left to sleep, as it was thought that he would know the affair quite soon enough as it was.

Marius was carried to the first floor, no one being acquainted with the fact in the rest of the house, and he was laid on an old sofa in M. Gillenormand's ante-room, and, while Basque went to fetch a physician and Nicolette opened the linen presses, Jean Valjean felt Javert touch his shoulder. He understood, and went down, Javert following close at his heels. They got into the hackney-coach, and the driver on his box.

"Inspector Javert," Jean Valjean said, "grant me one thing more. Let me go home for a moment, and you can then do with me what you please."

Javert remained silent for a few moments with his chin thrust into the collar of his great-coat, and then let down the front window.

"Driver," he said "No. 7, Rue de l'Homme Armé."

They did not speak during the entire ride. What did Jean Valjean want? To finish what he had begun; to warn Cosette, tell her where Marius was, give her perhaps some other useful information, and make, if he could, certain final arrangements.

On entering the Rue de l'Homme Armé the coach stopped, as the street was too narrow for vehicles to pass along it. Jean Valjean and Javert got out. The driver humbly represented to "Mr. Inspector" that the Utrecht velvet of his coach was quite spoilt by the blood of the assassinated man and the filth of the assassin, and he added that an indemnity was due to him.

"How much do you want, including the time you waited and the journey?"

"It's seven hours and a quarter," the driver answered, "and my velvet was bran new. Eighty francs, Mr. Inspector."

Javert took from his pocket four Napoleons, and dismissed the hackney-coach. Jean Valjean thought that it was Javert's intention to take him on foot to the Blancs Manteaux post, or that of the Archives, which were close by. They entered the street, which was as usual deserted. Javert followed Jean Valjean, and on reaching No. 7, the latter rapped, and the gate opened

"Very good," said Javert, "go up. I will wait for you here."

Jean Valjean looked at Javert, for this style of conduct was not at all a habit of Javert's. He thrust open the gate, entered the house, shouted to the porter, who was in bed, and had pulled the string in that posture, "It is I," and mounted the staircase. On reaching the first storey he paused, for every Via dolorosa has its stations. The window was open, and as is the case in many old houses, the staircase obtained light from, and looked out on, the street. Jean Valjean, either to breathe or mechanically, thrust his head out of this window and looked down into the street. It is short, and the lamp lit it from one end to the other. Jean Valjean had a bedazzlement of stupor: there was no one in it. Javert had gone away.

When Jean Valjean left him he retired slowly from the Rue de l'Homme Armé. He walked with drooping head for the first time in his life, and equally for the first time in his life with his hands behind his back. Up to that Javert had only assumed, of Napoleon's two attitudes, the one which expresses resolution, the arms folded on the chest; the one indicating uncertainty, the arms behind the back, was unknown to him. Now a change had taken place, and his whole person, slow and sombre, was stamped with anxiety.

His situation was indescribable: to owe his life to a malefactor, to accept this debt and repay him; to be, in spite of himself, on the same footing with an escaped convict, and requite one service with another service. One thing had astonished him, that Jean Valjean had shown him mercy, and one thing had petrified him, that he, Javert, had shown mercy to Jean Valjean.

One fact to which he constantly returned, was that he had just committed a frightful infraction of the law. He had closed his eyes to a relapsed convict who had broken his ban; he had set a galley-slave at liberty. He had stolen from the laws a man who belonged to them. He had done this, and no longer understood himself. Authority was dead within him, and he no longer had a reason for living.

Was this endurable? No, it was a violent state, were there ever one, and there were only two ways of escaping from it; one was to go resolutely to Jean Valjean and restore to the dungeon the man of the galleys; the other—

The darkness was complete. for it was the sepulchral mo-

ment which follows midnight, a ceiling of clouds hid the stars: the houses in the Cité did not display a single light, no one passed, all the streets and quays that could be seen were deserted, and Notre Dame and the towers of the Palace of Justice appeared lineaments of the night. A lamp reddened the edge of the quay, and the shadows of the bridges looked ghostly one behind the other. Rains had swelled the river. The spot where Javert was leaning was precisely above the rapids of the Seine and that formidable whirlpool which unrolls itself and rolls itself up again like an endless screw. Javert stooped down and looked; all was dark, and nothing could be seen, but the hostile coldness of the water and the sickly smell of the damp stones could be felt. Javert remained for some moments motionless, gazing at this opening of the darkness, and considered the invisible with an intentness which resembled attention. All at once he took off his hat and placed it on the brink of the quay. A moment after a tall black figure, which any belated passer by might have taken at a distance for a ghost, appeared standing on the parapet, stooped towards the Seine, then drew itself up, and fell straight into the darkness. There was a dull plash, and the shadows alone were in the secret of this obscure form which had disappeared beneath the waters.

CHAPTER XXIV

Basque and the porter had carried Marius, who was still lying motionless on the sofa on which he had been laid on arriving, into the drawing-room. The physician, who had been sent for, hurried in, and Aunt Gillenormand had risen. Aunt Gillenormand came and went, horrified, clasping her hands, and incapable of doing anything but saying, "Can it be possible?" She added at intervals, "Everything will be stained with blood."

By the surgeon's orders, a tester-bed was put up near the sofa. He examined Marius, and after satisfying himself that the pulse still beat, that the patient had no penetrating wound in the chest, and that the blood at the corners of the lips came from the nostrils, he had him laid flat on the bed without a pillow, the head level with the body, and even a little lower, and with naked bust, in order to facilitate the

breathing. The body had received no internal injury; a ball, deadened by the pocket-book, had deviated, and passed round the ribs with a frightful gash, but as it was not deep, it was, therefore, not dangerous. The long subterranean march had completed the dislocation of the collar-bone, and there were serious injuries there. The arms were covered with sabre-cuts: no scar disfigured the face, but the head was cut all over with gashes. What would be the state of these wounds on the head, it was impossible to say yet. It was a serious symptom that they had caused the faintness. And men do not always awake from such fainting fits; the hemorrhage, moreover, had exhausted the wounded man.

At the moment when the surgeon was wiping the face and gently touching with his finger the still closed eyelids, a door opened at the end of the room, and a tall, pale figure appeared,——it was the grandfather. The riot during the last two days had greatly agitated, offended, and occupied M. Gillenormand; he had not been able to sleep on the previous night, and he had been feverish all day. At night he went to bed at a very early hour, bidding his people bar up the house, and had fallen asleep through weariness.

He was standing on the threshold, with one hand on the handle, his head slightly bent forward and shaking, his body enfolded in a white dressing-gown, as straight and creaseless as a winding-sheet: he was surprised, and looked like a ghost peering into a tomb. He noticed the bed, and on the mattress this young bleeding man, of the whiteness of wax, with closed eyes, open mouth, livid cheeks, naked to the waist, marked all over with vermilion, wounded, motionless, and brightly illumined.

The grandfather had from head to foot that shudder which ossified limbs can have. His eyes, whose cornea was yellow owing to their great age, were veiled by a sort of glassy stare; his entire face assumed in an instant the earthy angles of a skeleton's head; his arm fell pendent as if a spring had been broken in them, and his stupor was displayed by the outspreading of all the fingers of his two old trembling hands.

"Marius!" he exclaimed.

He has just been brought here, sir," said Basque; "he went to the barricade, and—"

"He is dead, he is dead! he has let himself be killed at the barricade through hatred of me; it was against me that

he did it! Ah, the blood-drinker! that is the way, in which he returns to me. Woe of my life, he is dead!"

He went up to Marius, who was still livid, motionless, and began wringing his arms. The old gentleman's white lips moved as it were mechanically, and allowed indistinct sentences to pass, which were scarce audible. "Ah, heartless, ah! clubbist! ah, scoundrel! ah! Septembrizer!" reproaches uttered in a low voice by a dying man to a corpse. By degrees, as such internal eruptions must always burst forth, the flood of words returned, but the grandfather seemed no longer to have the strength to utter them; his voice was so hollow and choked that it seemed to come from the other brink of an abyss.

"I do not care a bit, I will die too. And since you were pitiless in letting yourself be killed so, I will not even feel sorry at your death; do you hear, Assassin!" At this moment Marius slowly opened his eyes, and his glance, still veiled by lethargic surprise, settled on M. Gillenormand.

"Marius!" the old man cried, "Marius, my little Marius! my child! my beloved son! you open your eyes! you look at me! you are alive! thanks!"

And he fell down in a fainting fit.

Marius was for a long time neither dead nor alive. He had for several weeks a fever accompanied by delirium, during which he repeated Cosette's name for whole nights with the lugubrious loquacity of his excited state. So long as there was danger from his wounds, M. Gillenormand, broken-hearted by the bedside of his grandson, was like Marius, neither dead nor alive.

Every day, and sometimes twice a day, a white-haired and well-dressed gentleman, such was the description given by the porter, came to inquire after the wounded man, and left a parcel of lint for the dressings. At length, on September 7th, four months, day by day, from the painful night on which he had been brought home dying to his grandfather, the physician declared that he could answer for him, and that convalescence was setting in. Marius, however, would be obliged to lie for two months longer on a couch, owing to the accidents produced by the fracture of the collar-bone.

Marius, while letting himself be nursed and petted, had one fixed idea, Cosette. Since the fever and delirium had left him he no longer pronounced this name, and it might be

supposed that he had forgotten it, but he was silent precisely because his soul was there. He knew not what had become of Cosette: the whole affair of the Rue de la Chanvrerie was like a cloud in his memory. Eponine, Gavroche, Mabœuf, the Thénardiers, and all his friends, mournfully mingled with the smoke of the barricade, the strange passage of M. Fauchelevent through that blood-stained adventure, produced upon him the effect of an enigma in a tempest: he understood nothing of his own life, he knew not how or by whom he had been saved, and no one about him knew it either: all they were able to tell him was that he had been brought there at night in a hackney-coach: but there was in this mist one immoveable point, a resolution, a will—to find Cosette again.

One day M. Gillenormand, while his daughter was arranging the phials and cups on the marble slab of the side-board, leant over Marius, and said in his most tender accent,—

"'Look you, my little Marius, in your place I would rather eat meat than fish; a fried sole is excellent at the beginning of a convalecence, but a good cutlet is necessary to put the patient on his legs."

Marius, whose strength had nearly quite returned, sat up, rested his two clenched fists on his sheet, looked his grandfather in the face, assumed a terrible air, and said,—

"That induces me to say one thing to you."

"What is it?"

"That I wish to marry."

"Foreseen," said the grandfather, bursting into a laugh. "You shall have your little maid."

Marius, stupefied and dazzled, trembled in all his limbs, and M. Gillenormand continued,—

"Yes, you shall have the pretty little dear. She comes every day in the form of an old gentleman to ask after you. I made inquiries; she lives at No. 7, Rue de l'Homme Armé. Ah! there we are! Ah, you want her, do you? Well, you shall have her. Look you, I saw that you did not love me, and I said, "What can I do to make that animal love me?" I said, 'Stay, I have my little Cosette ready to hand. I will give her to him, and then he must love me a little, or tell me the reason why.' Ah! you believed that the old man would storm, talk big, cry no, and lift his cane against all this dawn. Not at all. Cosette, very good; love, very good;

I ask for nothing better; take the trouble, sir, to marry, be happy, my beloved child."

After saying this the old man burst into sobs; he took Marius's head and pressed it to his old bosom, and both began weeping. That is one of the forms of supreme happiness.

"My father!" Marius exclaimed.

"Ah, you love me then!" the old man said.

There was an ineffable moment; they were choking, and could not speak; at length the old man stammered: "Come! the stopper is taken out of him; he called me father."

Marius disengaged his head from his grandfather's arms, and said, gently,—

"Now that I am better, father, I fancy I could see her."

"Foreseen, too, you will see her to-morrow."

"Father?"

"Well, what?"

"Why not to-day?"

"Well, to-day, done for to-day. You have called me father thrice, and it's worth that. I will see about it and she shall be brought here. Foreseen, I tell you."

Cosette and Marius saw each other again. We will not attempt to describe the interview: for there are things which we must not attempt to paint: the sun is of the number. The whole family, Basque and Nicolette included, were assembled in Marius's chamber at the moment when Cosette entered. She appeared in the doorway, and behind her had entered a white-haired man, serious, but still smiling, though the smile was wandering and poignant. It was "Monsieur Fauchelevent,"—it was Jean Valjean. He was *well-dressed*, as the porter had said, in a new black suit and a white cravat. When M. Fauchelevent arrived with Cosette the porter could not refrain from confiding this aside to his wife, "I don't know why, but I fancy that I have seen that face before." M. Fauchelevent remained standing by the door of Marius's room, as if afraid; he held under his arm a packet rather like an octavo volume wrapped in paper. The paper was green, apparently from mildew.

"Has this gentleman always got books under his arm like that?" Mademoiselle Gillenormand, who was not fond of books, asked Nicolette in a whisper.

"Well," M. Gillenormand, who had heard her, answered in the same key, "he is a savant, is that his fault? Monsieur

Boulard, whom I knew, never went out without a book either, and had always got one close to his heart."

Then bowing, he said, in a loud voice: "M. Tranchelevent."

Father Gillenormand did not do it purposely, but an inattention to proper names was an aristocratic way of his.

"Monsieur Tranchelevent, I have the honour of requesting this lady's hand for my grandson, M. le Baron Marius Pontmercy?"

Monsieur "Tranchelevent" bowed.

"All right," the grandfather said.

And turning to Marius and Cosette, with both arms extended in benediction, he cried,

"You have leave to adore each other."

They did not let it be said twice, and the prattling began. They talked in a whisper, Marius reclining on his couch and Cosette standing by his side. "Oh, Heaven!" Cosette murmured, "I see you again: it is you. To go and fight like that! But why? It is horrible. For four months I have been dead. Oh, how wicked it was of you to have been at that battle! What had I done to you? I forgive you, but you will not do it again."

"Angel!" said Marius.

Angel is the only word in the language which cannot be worn out; no other word would resist the pitiless use which lovers make of it.

Aunt Gillenormand witnessed with stupor this irruption of light into her antiquated house. This stupor had nothing aggressive about it; it was not at all the scandalized and envious glance cast by an owl at two ring-doves: it was the stupid eye of a poor innocent of the age of fifty-seven; it was a spoiled life looking at that triumph, love.

"Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder," her father said to her, "I told you that this would happen."

He remained silent for a moment, and added,—

"Look at the happiness of others."

Then he turned to Cosette.

"This darling is exquisite. She is a very little girl and a very great lady. She will be only a baroness, and that is a derogation, for she is born to be a marchioness. What eyelashes she has! My children, love one another; be foolish over it, for love is the stupidity of men and the cleverness of

God. So adore one another. Still," he added, suddenly growing sad, " what a misfortune ! more than half I possess is sunk in annuities ; so long as I live it will be all right, but when I am dead, twenty years hence, ah ! my poor children, you will not have a farthing. Your pretty white hands, Madame la Baronne, will be wrinkled by work."

Here a serious and calm voice was heard saying,—

" Mademoiselle Euphrasie Fauchelevent has six hundred thousand francs."

It was Jean Valjean's voice. He had not yet uttered a syllable ; no one seemed to remember that he was present, and he stood motionless behind all these happy people.

" Who is the Mademoiselle Euphrasie in question ? " the startled grandfather asked.

Myself," said Cosette.

" Six hundred thousand francs ! " M. Gillenormand repeated.

" Less fourteen or fifteen thousand, perhaps," Jean Valjean said.

And he laid on the table the parcel which Aunt Gillenormand had taken for a book. Jean Valjean himself opened the packet ; it was a bundle of bank-notes. They were turned over and counted ; there were six hundred bank-notes for a thousand francs, and one hundred and sixty-eight for five hundred, forming a total of five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs.

" That's a famous book," said M. Gillenormand.

As for Marius and Cosette, they were looking at each other during this period, and hardly paid any attention to the circumstance.

Of course our readers have understood, that Jean Valjean after the Champmathieu affair was enabled by his escape for a few days to come to Paris, and with draw in time from Laffitte's the sum he had gained under the name of M. Madeleine at M.-sur-M. ; and that, afraid of being re-captured, which in fact happened to him shortly after, he buried this sum in the forest of Montfermeil, at the spot called the Blaru bottom. The sum, six hundred and thirty thousand francs, all in bank-notes, occupied but little space, and was contained in a box ; but in order to protect the box from damp he placed it in an oak coffer filled with chips of chestnut-wood. In the same coffer he placed his other treasure, the Bishop's candlesticks, which it will be remembered he carried off in his escape from

M.-sur-M—. In a recent visit to the Blaru bottom, he had secretly removed that treasure, which he now represented as the fortune of Cosette.

All preparations were made for the marriage, and the physician, on being consulted, declared that it might take place in February. It was now December, and a few ravishing weeks of perfect happiness slipped away.

Cosette and Marius had suddenly passed from the sepulchre into paradise: the transition had not been prepared, and they would have been stunned if they had not been dazzled.

"Do you understand anything of all this?" Marius would say to Cosette.

"No," Cosette answered, "but it seems to me as if le Bon Dieu were looking at us."

Jean Valjean did everything, smoothed everything, conciliated everything, and rendered everything easy. As he had been Mayor, he was called to solve a delicate problem, the secret of which he alone possessed,—the civil status of Cosette. To tell her origin openly might have prevented the marriage, but he got Cosette out of all difficulties. He arranged for her a family of dead people, a sure method of not incurring any inquiry. Cosette was the only one left of an extinct family. Cosette was not his daughter, but the daughter of another Fauchelevent. Two brothers Fauchelevent had been gardeners at the convent of the Little Picpus: they went to this convent; the best testimonials and most satisfactory character were given; for the good nuns, little suited, and but little inclined to solve questions of paternity, had never known exactly of which of the two Fauchelevents Cosette was the daughter. They said what was wanted, and said it zealously. An act of notoriety was drawn up, and Cosette became by law Mademoiselle Euphrasie Fauchelevent, and was declared an orphan both on the father's and mother's side. Jean Valjean managed so as to be designated, under the name of Fauchelevent, as guardian of Cosette, with M. Gillenormand as supervising guardian. As for the five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs, they were a legacy left to Cosette by a dead person who wished to remain unknown: the original legacy had been five hundred and ninety-four thousand francs, but ten thousand had been spent in the education of Mademoiselle Euphrasie, five thousand of which had been paid to

the convent. This legacy, deposited in the hands of a third party, was to be handed over to Cosette upon her majority, or at the period of her marriage.

Cosette learned that she was not the daughter of the old man whom she had so long called father; he was only a relation, and another Fauchelevent was her real father. At another moment this would have grieved her, but in the ineffable hour she had now reached it was only a slight shadow, a passing cloud; and she had so much joy that this cloud lasted but a short time. She had Marius: the young man came, the old man disappeared; life is so. And then, Cosette had been accustomed for many long years to see enigmas around her; every being who has had a mysterious childhood is ever ready for certain renunciations. Still she continued to call Jean Valjean "father."

Aunt Gillenormand regarded all this with her usual imperturbable placidity. She had at first been in some doubt as to the propriety of the marriage; but the six hundred thousand francs had settle the old maid's indecision. Her father was accustomed to take her so little into account that he had not consulted her as to the consent to Marius's marriage. Somewhat roused internally, but externally impassive, she said to herself, "My father settled the marriage question without me, and I will settle the question of the inheritance without him." She was rich, in fact, and her father was not so, and it is probable that if the marriage had been poor she would have left it poor. But Cosette's half-a-million of francs pleased the aunt and changed her feelings with respect to the loving couple; consideration is due to six hundred thousand francs, and it was evident that she could not do otherwise than leave her fortune to these young people, because they no longer required it.

It was arranged that the couple should reside at M. Gillenormand's, and the grandfather insisted on giving them his bedroom, the finest room in the house. He furnished this room with a heap of old articles of gallantry; he had it hung with an extraordinary fabric which he had in the piece, and believed to be Utrecht, a gold satin ground with velvet auriculas.

"It was with that stuff," he said, "that the bed of the Duchess d'Auville in la Rocheguyon was hung." He placed

on the mantel-piece a figure in Saxon porcelain carrying a muff on its naked stomach.

The lovers saw each other daily; and Cosette came with M. Fauchelevent. Marius, in his innermost thoughts, surrounded with all sorts of questions this M. Fauchelevent, who was to him, simple, well-wishing, and cold. At times doubts occurred to him as to his own recollections; he had a hole in his memory, a blank spot, an abyss dug by four months of agony. Many things were lost in it, and he was beginning to ask himself whether it was the fact that he had seen M. Fauchelevent, a man so serious and so calm, at the barricade.

At moments Marius buried his face in his hand, and the tumultuous and vague past traversed the fog which he had in his brain. He saw Mabœuf fall again, he heard Gavroche singing under the grape-shot, and he felt on his lips the coldness of Eponine's forehead; Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Jean Provaire, Combeferre, Bossuet, Grantaire, all his friends rose before him, and then disappeared. M. Fauchelevent had almost a place among these vanished beings. Marius hesitated to believe that the Fauchelevent of the barricade was the same as that Fauchelevent in flesh and bone, so gravely seated by the side of Cosette. The first was probably one of those nightmares brought to him and carried away by his hours of delirium. Two men who have a common secret, and who, by a sort of tacit agreement, do not exchange a syllable on the subject, are not so rare as may be supposed. Once, however, Marius made an effort; he turned the conversation on the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and turning to M. Fauchelevent, he said to him,—

"Do you know that street well?"

"What street?"

"The Rue de la Chanvrerie."

"I have never heard the name of that street," M. Fauchelevent said, in the most natural tone in the world.

The answer, which related to the name of the street, and not to the street itself, seemed to Marius more conclusive than it really was.

"Decidedly," he thought, "I must have been dreaming. I had an hallucination. It was some one that resembled him, and M. Fauchelevent was not there."

The enchantment, great though it was, did not efface other thoughts from Marius's mind. While the marriage arrange-

ments were being made, and the fixed period was waited for, he made some difficult and scrupulous retrospective researches. He owed gratitude in several quarters, he owed it for his father, and he owed it for himself. There was Thénardier, and there was the stranger who had brought him back to M. Gillenormand's. Marius was anxious to find these two men again, as he did not wish to marry, be happy, and forget them, and feared lest these unpaid debts of honour might cast a shadow over his life, which would henceforth be so luminous. It was impossible for him to leave all these arrears suffering behind him, and he wished, ere he entered joyously into the future, to obtain a receipt from the past. That Thénardier was a villain took nothing from the fact that he had saved Colonel Pontmercy. Thénardier was a bandit for all the world except for Marius. And Marius, ignorant of the real scene on the battlefield of Waterloo, did not know this peculiarity, that his father stood to Thénardier in the strange situation of owing him life without owing him gratitude. Not one of the agents whom Marius employed could find Thénardier's trail, and the disappearance seemed complete on that side.

As for the other, the unknown man who had saved Marius, the researches had at first some result, and then stopped short. They succeeded in finding again the hackney-coach which had brought Marius to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire on the night of June 6. The driver declared, that on the 6th June, by the order of a police agent, he had stopped from three P.M. till night-fall on the quay of the Champs Élysées, above the opening of the great sewer; that at about nine in the evening the gate of the sewer which looks upon the river-bank opened; that a man came out, bearing on his shoulders another man, who appeared to be dead; that the agent who was watching at this point, had arrested the living man, and seized the dead man; that he, the coachman, had taken "all these people" into his hackney-coach; that they drove first to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire, and deposited the dead man there; that the dead man was M. Marius, and that he, the coachman, recognized him thoroughly, though he was alive this time; that afterwards they got into his coach again, and a few yards from the gate of the Archives he was ordered to stop; that he was paid in the street and discharged, and the agent took away the other man; that he knew nothing more. and that the night was

very dark. Marius, as we said, remembered nothing. He merely remembered that he had been seized from behind by a powerful hand, at the moment when he fell backwards from the barricade, and then all was effaced for him. He had only regained his senses when he was at M. Gillenormand's.

He lost himself in conjectures; some one had brought him from the quarter of the Halles to the Champs Elysées, and how? By the sewer? Extraordinary devotion! Some one? who? it was the man whom Marius was seeking. Of this man, who was his saviour, he could find nothing, not a trace, not the slightest sign. Marius, though compelled on this side to exercise a great reserve, pushed on his inquiries as far as the Prefecture of Police, but there the information which he obtained led to no better result than elsewhere. The Prefecture knew less about the matter than the driver of the hackney-coach. Why did this man not re-appear? Was he dead? who was the man? No one was able to say; the driver replied,—"The night was very dark." The porter, whose candle had lit up Marius's tragic arrival, had alone remarked the man in question, and this was the description he gave of him, "The man was frightful."

One evening Marius was speaking in the presence of Cosette and Jean Valjean about all this singular adventure, the countless inquiries he had made, and the inutility of his efforts; Monsieur Fauchelevent's cold face offended him, and he exclaimed with a vivacity which had almost the vibration of anger,—

"Yes, that man, whoever he may be, was sublime. Do you know what he did, sir? He must have gone more than a league and a half through frightful subterranean galleries, bent and bowed in the darkness, in the sewer, for more than half a league, sir, with a corpse on his back! And for what object? for the sole object of saving that corpse, and that corpse was myself. He said to himself,—'There is, perhaps, a gleam of life left here, and I will risk my existence for this wretched spark!' and he did not risk his existence once, but twenty times! and each step was a danger. Oh! if Cosette's six hundred thousand francs were mine—"

They are yours," Jean Valjean interrupted.

"Well, then," Marius continued, "I would give them to find that man again."

Jean Valjean was silent.

The night of February 16th was a blessed night, for it had above its shadow the open sky. It was the wedding-night of Marius and Cosette.

The marriage was celebrated in due form. It rained on that day, but there is always in the sky a little blue patch at the service of happiness, which lovers see, even when the rest of creation are under their umbrellas. On the previous day, Jean Valjean had handed to Marius, in the presence of M. Gillenormand, the five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs. As the marriage took place in the ordinary way, the deeds were very simple. Toussaint was henceforth useless to Jean Valjean, so Cossette inherited her, and promoted her to the rank of lady's-maid. As for Jean Valjean, a nice room was furnished expressly for him at M. Gillenormand's, and Cosette had said to him so irresistibly,—"Father, I implore you," that she had almost made him promise that he would come and occupy it. A few days before that fixed for the marriage, an accident happened to Jean Valjean; he slightly injured the thumb of his right hand. It was not serious, and he had not allowed any one to poultice it, or even see it, not even Cosette. Still, it compelled him to wrap up his hand in a bandage and wear his arm in a sling, and this, of course, prevented him from signing anything. M. Gillenormand, as supervising guardian to Cosette, took his place. We will not take the reader either to the mayoralty or to church. We will restrict ourselves to noting an incident which, though unnoticed by the bridal party, marked the drive from the Rue des Filles du Calvaire to St. Paul's church.

The Rue Saint Louis was being repaired at the time, and it was blocked from the Rue du Parc Royal, hence it was impossible for the carriage to go direct to St. Paul's As they were obliged to change their course, the most simple plan was to turn into the boulevard. One of the guests drew attention to the fact that, as it was Shrove Tuesday, there would be a block of vehicles. "Why so?" M. Gillenormand asked. "On account of the masks." "Famous," said the grandfather; "we will go that way. These young people are going to marry and see the serious side of life, and seeing the masquerade will be a slight preparation for it." They turned into the boulevard; the first carriage contained Cosette and Aunt Gillenormand, M. Gillenormand, and Jean Valjean. Marius,

still separated from his bride, according to custom, was in the second. The nuptial procession, on turning out of the Rue des Filles du Calvaire, joined the long file of vehicles making an endless chain from the Madeleine to the Bastille, and from the Bastille to the Madeleine. Masks were abundant on the boulevard : and though it rained every now and then, Palisse, Pantaloon, and Gille were obstinate. In the good humour of that winter of 1833 Paris had disguised itself as Venus. We do not see such Shrove Tuesdays now-a-days, for as everything existing is a wide-spread carnival, there is no carnival left.

Accident willed it that one of the shapeless groups of masked men and women collected in a vast barouche, stopped on the left of the boulevard, while the wedding party stopped on the right. The carriage in which the masks were, noticed opposite to it the carriage in which was the bride.

"Hilloh!" said a mask, "a wedding."

"A false wedding," another retorted, "we are the true one."

And, as they were too far off to address the wedding party, and as they also feared the interference of the police, the two masks looked elsewhere. The whole vehicle load had plenty of work a moment after, for the mob began hissing it, which is the caress given by the mob to masquerades, and the two masks who had just spoken were obliged to face the crowd with their comrades, and found the projectiles from the arsenal of the Halles scarce sufficient to reply to the enormous barks of the people. A frightful exchange of metaphors took place between the masks and the crowd. In the meanwhile, two other masks in the same carriage, a Spaniard with an exaggerated nose, an oldish look, and enormous black moustaches, and a thin and very youthful fish-girl, wearing a half mask, had noticed the wedding also, and while their companions and the spectators were insulting each other, held a conversation in a low voice. Their aside was covered by the tumult and was lost in it. This was the dialogue, which we translate from the original slang.

"Look here. Do you see that old man in the wedding coach, with his arm in a sling?"

"Well?"

"I feel sure that I know him."

"Ah!"

"May my neck be cut, and I never said you, thou, or I, in my life, if I do not know that Parisian."

"To-day Paris is Pantin."

"Can you see the bride by stooping?"

"No."

"And the bridegroom?"

"There is no bridegroom in that coach, unless it be that other old man."

"Come, try and get a look at the bride by stooping."

"I can't."

"No matter, that old fellow who has something the matter with his paw, I feel certain I know him."

"And what good will it do you, your knowing him?"

"Listen. You must do something."

"What is it?"

"Get out of our trap and follow that wedding; to know where it goes and what it is. Make haste and get down; run, my daughter, for you are young."

"I can't leave the carriage."

"Why not?"

"I am hired. I owe the Prefecture my day's work."

"That's true."

"If I leave the carriage, the first inspector who sees me will arrest me. You know that."

"Yes, I know it. No matter, that old fellow bothers me. He is in the first carriage, the bride's carriage. So he is the father."

"How does that concern me?"

"Listen."

"Well, what?"

"I can only go away masked, for I am hidden here, and no one knows I am here. But to-morrow there will be no masks, for it is Ash Wednesday, and I run a risk of being nailed. I shall be obliged to go back to my hole, but you are free."

"Well, what then?"

"You must try and find out where that wedding party is going to."

"They can do as they like, for weddings are free."

"That is not the thing. I tell you that you must try and find out for me what that wedding is, and where it comes from. Do you hear, Azelma?"

The two files recommenced their opposite movement on the boulevard, and the carriage of masks lost out of sight that which contained the bride.

All the marriage ceremonies were duly performed. After pronouncing before the mayor and before the priest all the yeses possible, after signing the register at the municipality and in the sacristy, after exchanging rings, after kneeling side by side under the canopy of white moire in the smoke of the censer,—they arrived holding each other by the hand, admired and envied by all—Marius in black, she in white—preceded by the beadle in the colonel's epaulettes, striking the flag-stones with his halbert, between two rows of dazzled spectators at the church doors, which were thrown wide open, ready to get into their carriage—and then all was over. Cosette could not yet believe it. She looked at Marius, she looked at the crowd, looked at heaven; it seemed as if she were afraid of awaking. Her astonished and anxious air imparted something strangely enchanting to her. In returning they both rode in the same carriage, Marius seated by Cosette's side, and M. Gillenormand and Jean Valjean forming their vis-à-vis. Aunt Gillenormand had fallen back a step and was in the second carriage. "My children," the grandfather said, "you are now M. le Baron and Madame la Baronne, with thirty thousand francs a-year." And Cosette, nuzzling against Marius, caressed his ear with the angelic whisper, "It is true, then, my name is Marius, and I am Madame Thou." These two beings were resplendent, they had reached the irrevocable and irrecoverable moment, the dazzling point of intersection of all youth and all joy.

The delight of these two hearts overflowed upon the crowd and imparted meriment to the passers-by. People stopped in the Rue St Antoine, in front of St Paul's, to look through the carriage-window—the orange flowers trembling on Cosette's head. Then they returned to the Rue des Filles du Calvairre—home. Marius, side by side with Cosette, ascended, triumphantly and radiantly, that staircase up which he had been dragged in a dying state. There were flowers everywhere, and the house was no less fragrant than the church; after the incense the rose. Marius gazed at Cosette's charming bare arm and the pink things which could be vaguely seen through the lace of the stomacher, and Cosette, catching Marius's glance, blushed to the white of her eyes. A good many old friends of the Gillenormand family had been invited, and they thronged round Cosette, outvying each other in calling her Madame la Baronne. The officer, Theodule Gillenormand, now captain,

had come from Chartres, where he was stationed, to be present at his cousin's marriage : Cosette did not recognize him. He, on his side, accustomed to be thought a pretty fellow by the women, remembered Cosette no more than any other.

Cosette had never been more affectionate to Jean Valjean, and she was in unison with Father Gillenormand ; while he built up joy in aphorisms and maxims, she exhaled love and beauty like a perfume. Happiness wishes everybody to be happy. In talking to Jean Valjean she formed inflections of her voice from the time when she was a little girl, and caressed him with a smile. A banquet had been prepared in the dining-room which was a furnace of gay things ; in the centre, above the white glistening tables, hung a Venetian chandelier, with all sorts of coloured birds, blue, violet, red, and green, perched among the candles ; round the chandelier were girandoles, and on the walls were mirrors with three and four branches ; glasses, crystal, plate, china, crockery, gold, and silver, all flashed and rejoiced. The spaces between the candelabra were filled up with bouquets, so that where there was not a light there was a flower. In the anteroom three violins and a flute played some of Haydn's quartettes. Jean Valjean had seated himself on a chair in the drawing-room, behind the door, which, being thrown back, almost concealed him. A few minutes before they sat down to table Cosette gave him a deep courtesy, while spreading out her wedding-dress with both hands, and with a tenderly mocking look, asked him, "Father, are you satisfied ?"

"Yes," said Jean Valjean, "I am satisfied."

"Well, then, laugh."

Jean Valjean began laughing. A few minutes later Basque came in to announce that dinner was on the table. The guests, preceded by M. Gillenormand, who gave his arm to Cosette, entered the dining-room, and collected round the table in the prescribed order. There was a large easy chair on either side of the bride, one for M. Gillenormand, the other for Jean Valjean. M. Gillenormand seated himself, but the other chair remained empty. All looked round for Monsieur Fauchelevent, but he was no longer there, and M. Gillenormand hailed Basque.

"Do you know where M. Fauchelevent is ?"

"Yes, sir, I do," Basque replied. "Monsieur Fauchelevent requested me to tell you, sir, that his hand pained him, and that he could not dine with M. le Baron and Madame la Baronne.

He therefore begged to be excused, but would call to-morrow, He has just left."

This empty chair momentarily chilled the effusion of the wedding feast; but though M. Fauchelevent was absent M. Gillenormand was there, and the grandfather shone for two. He declared that M. Fauchelevent acted rightly in going to bed early if he were in pain, but that it was only a small hurt. This declaration was sufficient; besides, what is a dark corner in such a submersion of joy? Cosette and Marius were in one of those egotistic and blessed moments when people possess no other faculty than that of perceiving joy.

The evening was lively, gay, and pleasant; the sovereign good-humour of the grandfather gave the tone to the whole festivity, and each was regulated by this almost centenerical cordiality. There was a little dancing, and a good deal of laughter; it was a merry wedding, to which that worthy old fellow "Once on a time" might have been invited; however, he was present in the person of Father Gillenormand. There was a tumult, and then a silence; the married couple disappeared. A little after midnight the Gillenormand mansion became a temple. Here we stop, for an angel stands on the threshold of wedding-nights, smiling, and with finger on lip; the mind becomes contemplative before this sanctuary in which the celebration of love is held.

What had become of Jean Valjean? Directly after he had laughed, in accordance with Cosette's request, as no one was paying any attention to him, Jean Valjean rose, and, unnoticed, reached the anteroom. It was the same room which he had entered, eight months previously, black with mud and blood and gunpowder, bringing back the grandson to the grandfather. Basque, in black coat, knee-breeches, white cravat, and white gloves, was placing wreaths of roses round each of the dishes which was going to be served up. Jean Valjean showed him his arm in a sling, requested him to explain his absence, and quitted the house. Jean Valjean returned home, lit his candle, and went upstairs. The apartments were empty, and not even Toussaint was in them now. Jean Valjean's footsteps made more noise in the rooms than usual. He looked at the walls, closed some of the wardrobe drawers, and walked in and out of the rooms. Then he returned to his own room and placed his candle on the table; he had taken his arm out of the sling

and used it as if he were suffering no pain in it. He went up to his bed, and his eyes fell on the *inseparable* of which Cosette had been jealous, the little valise which never left him. On June 4th, when he arrived at the Rue de l'Homme Armé, he laid it on a table; he now walked up to this table with some eagerness, took the key out of his pocket, and opened the portmanteau. He slowly drew out the clothes in which, ten years previously, Cosette had left Montfermeil; first the little black dress, then the black handkerchief, then the stout shoes, which Cosette could almost have worn still, so small was her foot; next the petticoat, then the apron, and, lastly, the woollen stockings. These stockings, in which the shape of a little leg was gracefully marked, were no longer than Jean Valjean's hand. All these articles were black, and it was he who took them for her to Montfermeil. He arranged the little clothes on the bed, the handkerchief near the petticoat, the stockings along with the shoes, the apron by the side of the dress, and he looked at them one after the other. She was then not much taller than that, she had her large doll in her arms, she had put her louis d'or in the pocket of this apron, she laughed, they walked along holding each other's hand, and she had no one but him in the world.

Then his venerable white head fell on the bed, his old stoical heart broke, his face was buried in Cosette's clothes, and had any one passed up-stairs at that moment he would have heard frightful sobs.

This night, however, Jean Valjean felt that he was fighting his last battle. A crushing question presented itself,—In what way was Jean Valjean going to behave to the happiness of Cosette and Marius? That happiness he had willed, he had made; and at this hour, in gazing upon it, he could have the species of satisfaction which a cutler would have who recognized his trade-mark upon a knife, when he drew it all smoking from his chest. Cosette had Marius, Marius possessed Cosette; they possessed everything, even wealth, and it was his doing. But, now that this happiness existed and was there, how was he, Jean Valjean, to treat it? Should he force himself upon it and treat it as if belonging to himself? Doubtless Cosette was another man's; but should he, Jean Valjean, retain of Cosette all that he could retain? Should he remain the sort of father, scarce seen, but respected, which he had hitherto

been ? should he introduce himself quietly into Cosette's house ? should he carry his past to this future without saying a word ? should he present himself there as one having a right ? and should he sit down, veiled, at this luminous hearth ? Should he smilingly take the hands of these two innocent creatures in his tragic hands ? should he place on the andirons of the Gillenormand drawing-room his feet which dragged after them the degrading shadow of the law ? Should he render the obscurity on his brow and the cloud on theirs denser ? should he join his catastrophe to their two felicities ? Should he force his galleys on these two dazzling children, or consummate his own irremediable destruction ? On one side was the sacrifice of Cosette, on the other his own.

On which solution did he decide ? what determination did he form ? what extremity did he accept ? His confusing reverie lasted all night ; he remained till day-break in the same position, leaning over the bed, prostrate beneath the enormity of fate. He remained thus for twelve hours, the twelve hours of a long winter's night, frozen, without raising his head or uttering a syllable. To see him thus you would have thought him a dead man ; but all at once he started convulsively, and his mouth, pressed to Cosette's clothes, kissed them ; then you could see that he was alive.

CHAPTER XXV

The day after a wedding is solitary, for people respect the retirement of the happy, and to some extent their lengthened slumbers. On the morning of Feb. 17 it was a little past midday when Basque, with napkin and feather-brush under his arm, was dusting the ante-room, when he heard a low tap at the door. Basque opened and saw M. Fauchelevent ; he conducted him to the drawing-room, which was still in great confusion, and looked like the battle-field of the previous day's joys.

" Really, sir," observed Basque, " we woke late."

" Is your master up ? " Jean Valjean asked.

" Which one ? the old or the new ? "

" Monsieur Pontmercy."

" Monsieur le Baron ? " said Basque, drawing himself up. " I will go and see. I will tell him that Monsieur Fauchelevent is here."

" No, do not tell him it is I. Tell him that some one wishes

to speak to him privately, and do not mention my name."

"Ah!" said Basque.

"I wish to surprise him."

A few moments passed, during which Jean Valjean remained motionless at the spot where Basque left him. His eyes were hollow, and so sunk in their sockets by sleeplessness that they almost disappeared. His black coat displayed the fatigued creases of a coat which had been up all night, and the elbows were white with that down which friction with linen leaves on cloth. Jean Valjean looked at the window designed on the floor at his feet by the sun. There was a noise at the door, and he raised his eyes. Marius came in with head erect, laughing mouth, a peculiar light over his face, a smooth forehead, and flashing a eye. He, too, had not slept either.

"It is you, father!" he exclaimed, on perceiving Jean Valjean "why, that ass Basque affected the mysterious. But you have come too early, it is only half-past twelve, and Cosette is asleep."

That word, father, addressed to M. Fauchelevent by Marius, signified supreme felicity. There had always been, as we know a coldness and constraint between them. Marius was so intoxicated that the ice dissolved, and M. Fauchelevent was for him, as for Cosette, a father. He continued, the words overflowed with him, which is peculiar to these divine paroxysms of joy, "How delighted I am to see you! If you only knew how we missed you yesterday! Good day, father; how is your hand? Better, is it not?"

And, satisfied with the favourable answer which he gave himself, he went on,—

"We both spoke about you, for Cosette loves you so dearly. You will not forget that you have a room here, for we will not hear a word about the Rue de l'Homme Armé. I do not know how you were able to live in that street, which is sick, and mean, and poor, which has a barrier at one end, where you feel cold, and which no one can enter! You will come and install yourself here, and from to-day, or else you will have to settle with Cosette. She intends to lead us both by the nose, I warn you. You have seen your room, it is close to ours, and looks out on the gardens: we have had the lock mended, the bed is made, it is all ready, and you have only to move in. You have won my grandfather, for you suit him: we will live together.

Do you know whist? You will overwhelm my grandfather if you are acquainted with whist. You will take Cosette for a walk on the day when I go to the Courts; you will give her your arm, as you used to do, you remember, formerly at the Luxembourg. We are absolutely determined to be very happy, and you will share in our happiness do you hear, papa? By the by, you will breakfast with us this morning?"

"I have one thing to remark to you, sir," said Jean Valjean "I am an ex-convict."

The limit of the perceptible acute sounds may be as well exceeded for the mind as for the ear. These words, "*I am an ex-convict*," coming from M. Fauchelevent's mouth and entering Marius's ear went beyond possibility. Marius did not hear: it seemed to him as if something had been just said to him, but he knew not what. He stood with gaping mouth. Jean Valjean unfastened the black handkerchief that supported his right arm, undid the linen rolled round his hand, bared his thumb, and showed it to Marius.

"I have nothing the matter with my hand," he said.

Marius looked at the thumb.

"There was never anything the matter with it," Jean Valjean added.

There was, in fact, no sign of a wound. Jean Valjean continued. "It was proper that I should be absent from your marriage, and I was so far as I could. I feigned this wound in order not to commit a forgery, and render the marriage deeds null and void."

Marius stammered. "What does this mean?"

"It means," Jean Valjean replied, "that I have been to the galleys."

"You are driving me mad," said the horrified Marius.

"Monsieur Pontmercy," said Jean Valjean, "I was nineteen years at the galleys for robbery. Then I was sentenced to them for life, for robbery and a second offence. At the present moment I am an escaped convict."

Although Marius recoiled before the reality, refused the facts, and resisted the evidence, he was obliged to yield to it. He was beginning to understand, and as always happens in such a case, he understood too much. He foresaw a frightful destiny for himself in the future.

"Say all, say all," he exclaimed, "you are Cosette's father!"

And he fell back two steps, with a movement of indescribable horror. Jean Valjean threw up his head with such a majestic attitude that he seemed to rise to the ceiling.

"It is necessary that you should believe me here, sir, although the oath of men like us is not taken in a court of justice." He spoke slowly, but with great earnestness. "You will believe me. I, Cosette's father! Before Heaven, no, Monsieur le Baron Pontmercy. I am a peasant of Faverolles, and earned my livelihood by pruning trees. My name is not Fauchelevent, but Jean Valjean. I am nothing to Cosette, so reassure yourself."

Marius stammered, "Who proves it to me?"

"I do, since I say it."

Marius looked at this man: he was mournful and calm and no falsehood could issue from such calmness.

"I do believe you," said Marius.

Jean Valjean bowed his head, as if to note the fact, and continued,—

"What am I to Cosette? A passer-by. Ten years ago I did not know that she existed. I love her, it is true, for men love a child which they have seen little when old themselves; when a man is old he feels like a grandfather to all little children. She was an orphan, without father or mother, and needed me, and that is why I came to love her. To-day Cosette leaves my life, and our two roads separate. Henceforth I can do no more for her; she is Madame Pontmercy. As for the six hundred thousand francs, you say nothing of them, but I will meet your thought half way: they are a deposit. How was it placed in my hands? No matter. I give up the deposit, and there is nothing more to ask of me. I complete the restitution by stating my real name, and this too concerns myself, for I am anxious that you should know who I am."

And Jean Valjean looked Marius in the face. Marius was stupefied by the new situation which appeared to him, and spoke to this man almost as if he were angry at the avowal.

"But why," he exclaimed, "do you tell me all this? Who forces you to do so? You might have kept your secret to yourself. You are neither denounced, nor pursued, nor tracked."

"You ask why I speak? I am neither denounced, nor pursued, nor tracked, you say. Yes, I am denounced! Yes, I am pursued! Yes, I am tracked! By whom? By myself. It

is I who bar my own passage, and I drag myself along, and I push myself, and I arrest myself, and execute myself, and when a man holds himself he is securely held."

And seizing his own collar, and dragging it towards Marius, he continued: "Look at this fist. Do you think that it holds this collar so as not to let it go? Well, conscience is a very different hand! If you wish to be happy, sir, you must never understand duty; for so soon as you have understood it it is implacable. People may say that it punishes you for understanding it, but no, it rewards you for it, for it places you in a hell where you feel GOD by your side. A man has no sooner torn his entrails than he is at peace with himself." And with an indescribable accent, he added: "Monsieur Pontmercy, I am an honest man. It is by degrading myself in your eyes that I raise myself in my own. I am a galley-slave who obeys his conscience. I know very well that this is not likely, but what would you have me do? It is so. I have made engagements with myself, and keep them. Look you, Monsieur Pontmercy, things have happened to me in my life."

Jean Valjean made a pause, swallowing his saliva with an effort, as if his words had a bitter after-taste, and he continued: "When a man has such a horror upon him, he has no right to make others share it unconsciously. Fauchelevent may have lent me his name, but I have no right to use it. A name is a self. To be a false signature in flesh and blood, to be a living false key, to enter among honest folk by picking their lock, never to look, but always to squint, to be internally infamous,—no! no! no! no! It is better to suffer, bleed, weep, tear one's flesh with one's nails, pass the nights writhing in agony, and gnaw one's stomach and soul. That is why I have come to tell you all this, voluntarily, as you remarked."

He breathed painfully, and uttered this last remark,—

"Formerly I stole a loaf in order to live; to-day I will not steal a name in order to live."

"To live!" Marius interrupted, "you do not require that name to live."

"Ah! I understand myself," Jean Valjean replied, raising and drooping his head several times in succession. There was a silence; both held their tongue, sunk as they were in a gulf of thought. Marius was sitting near a table, and supporting the corner of his mouth in one of his fingers. Jean

Valjean walked backwards and forwards; he stopped before a glass and remained motionless. Then, as if answering some internal reasoning, he said, as he looked in this glass, in which he did not see himself: "While at present I am relieved."

He began walking again, and went to the other end of the room. At the moment when he turned he perceived that Marius was watching his walk, and he said to him, with an indescribable accent,—

"I drag my leg a little. You understand why now."

Then he turned round full to Marius.

"And now, sir, imagine this. I have said nothing. I have remained Monsieur Fauchelevent. I have taken my place in your house. I am one of your family. At night we go to the play, all three. I accompany Madame Pontmercy to the Tuileries and to the Place Royale; we are together, and you believe me your equal. One fine day I am here, you are there. We are talking and laughing, and you hear a voice cry this name,—Jean Valjean! and then that fearful hand, the police, issues from the shadow, and suddenly tears off my mask!"

He was silent again. Marius had risen with a shudder, and Jean Valjean continued: "What do you say to that?"

Marius's silence replied, and Jean Valjean continued,—

"You see very well that I did right in not holding my tongue. Be happy, be in heaven, be the angel of an angel, be in the sunshine and content yourself with it, and do not trouble yourself as to the way in which a poor condemned man opens his heart and does his duty; you have a wretched man before you, sir."

Marius slowly crossed the room, and when he was by Jean Valjean's side offered him his hand. But Marius was compelled to take this hand which did not offer itself. Jean Valjean let him do so, and it seemed to Marius that he was pressing a hand of marble.

"My grandfather has friends," said Marius. "I will obtain your pardon."

"It is useless," Jean Valjean replied; "I am supposed to be dead, and that is sufficient. The dead are not subjected to surveillance, and are supposed to rot quietly. Death is the same thing as pardon."

And liberating the hand which Marius held, he added with a sort of inexorable dignity,—

"Moreover, duty, my duty, is the friend to whom I have recourse, and I only need one pardon, that of my conscience."

At this moment the door opened gently at the other end of the drawing-room, and Cosette's head appeared in the crevice. Only her sweet face was visible. Her hair was in admirable confusion, and her eyelids were still swollen with sleep. She made the movement of a bird thrusting its head out of the nest, looked first at her husband, then at Jean Valjean, and cried to them laughingly—it looked like a smile issuing from a rose,—

"I will bet that you are talking politics. How stupid that is, instead of being with me!" Jean Valjean started.

"Cosette," Marius stammered, and he stopped. They looked like two culprits; Cosette, radiant, continued to look at them both, and there were in her eyes gleams of Paradise.

"I have caught you in the act," Cosette said, "I just heard through this, Father Fauchelevent saying, Conscience, doing one's duty. That is politics, and I will have none of it. People must not talk politics on the very next day, it is not right."

"You are mistaken, Cosette," Marius replied, "we are talking of business. We are talking about the best way of investing your six hundred thousand francs."

"I will come in," Cosette interrupted; "though you do not seem to want me here?"

Jean Valjean did not utter a word, and Cosette turned to him.

"In the first place, father, I insist on your coming and kissing me. What do you mean by saying nothing, instead of taking my part? Did you ever see a father like that? Come and kiss me at once."

Then she offered her forehead to Jean Valjean, who moved a step towards her. All at once Cosette recoiled.

"Father, you are pale, does your arm pain you?"

"It is cured," said Jean Valjean.

"Have you slept badly?"

"No."

"Are you sad?"

"No."

"Kiss me. If you are well, if you sleep soundly, if you are happy, I will not scold you."

And she again offered him her forehead, and Jean Valjean set a kiss on this forehead, upon which there was a heavenly reflection.

"Smile."

Jean Valjean obeyed, but it was the smile of a ghost.

"And now," Cosette continued, as she smoothed a crease in her dressing-gown, with a little triumphant pout, "I remain."

"No," Marius replied, imploringly, "we have something to finish."

"Ah, you are putting on your man's voice, sir; very good, I will go. You did not support me, father; and so you, my hard husband, and you, my dear papa, are tyrants. I shall go and tell grandpapa."

And she left the room, but two seconds after the door opened again, her fresh, rosy face passed once again between the two folding doors, and she cried to them: "I am very angry."

The door closed, and darkness returned. It was like a straggling sunbeam, which, without suspecting it, had suddenly traversed the night. Marius assured himself that the door was really closed.

"Poor Cosette," he muttered, "when she learns—"

At these words Jean Valjean trembled all over, and he fixed his haggard eyes on Marius.

"Cosette! oh, yes, it is true. You will tell Cosette about it. Stay, I did not think of that. A man has strength for one thing, but not for another. I implore you, sir, give me your sacred word, do not tell her. A convict, what! you would be obliged to explain to her; tell her it is a man who has been to the galleys. She saw the chain-gang once; oh, my GOD!"

He sank into a chair and buried his face in his hands; it could not be heard, but from the heaving of his shoulders it could be seen that he was weeping. They were silent tears, terrible tears. A species of convulsion seized on him, he threw himself back in the chair, letting his arms hang, and displaying to Marius his face bathed in tears, and Marius heard him mutter so low that his voice seemed to come from a bottomless abyss, "Oh! I would like to die."

"Be at your ease," Marius said, "I will keep your secret to myself."

And, less affected than perhaps he ought to have been, but compelled for more than an hour to listen to unexpected horrors, gradually seeing a convict taking M. Fauchelevent's place, gradually overcome by this mournful reality, and led by the natural state of the situation to notice the gap which

had formed, between himself and this man, Marius added,—

"It is impossible for me not to say a word about the trust money which you have so faithfully given up. That is an act of probity, and it is but fair that a reward should be given you; fix the sum yourself, and it shall be paid you. Do not fear to fix it very high."

"I thank you, sir," Jean Valjean replied gently.

He remained pensive for a moment, mechanically passing the end of his fore-finger over his thumb-nail, and then raised his voice—

"All is nearly finished; there is only one thing left me."

Jean Valjean had a species of supreme agitation, and voicelessly, almost breathlessly, he stammered, rather than said,—

"Now that you know, do you, sir, who are the master, believe that I ought not to see Cosette again?"

"I believe that it would be better," Marius replied, coldly.

"I will not see her again," Jean Valjean murmured. And he walked towards the door; he placed his hand upon the handle, the door opened, Jean Valjean was going to pass out, when he suddenly closed it again, then opened the door again and returned to Marius. He was no longer pale, but livid, and in his eyes was a sort of tragic flame, instead of tears. His voice had grown strangely calm again.

"Stay, sir," he said, "if you like I will come to see her, for I assure you that I desire it greatly. If I had not longed to see Cosette, I should not have made you the confession I have done, but have gone away; but wishing to remain at the spot where Cosette is, and continue to see her, I was obliged to tell you everything honestly. If you have no objection, I will come and see Cosette every now and then, but not too often, and I will not remain long. Really, sir, I should like to see Cosette a little, but as rarely as you please. And then, again, we must be careful, and if I did not come at all it would have a bad effect, and appear singular."

"You can come every evening," said Marius, "and Cosette will expect you."

"You are kind, sir," said Jean Valjean.

Marius bowed to Jean Valjean, happiness accompanied despair to the door, and these two men parted.

Marius was overwhelmed; the sort of estrangement which he had ever felt for the man with whom he saw Cosette was hence-

forth explained. This M. Fauchelevent was Jean Valjean, the convict. To find suddenly such a secret in the midst of his happiness was like discovering a scorpion in a turtle-dove's nest.

The honest restoration of the trust-money and the probity of the confession were good, and formed as it were a break in the cloud; but then the cloud became black again. However confused Marius's reminiscences might be, some shadows still returned to him. This man was at the barricade, and did not fight, what did he want there? Before this question a spectre rose, and gave the answer, Javert. Marius perfectly remembered now the mournful vision of Jean Valjean dragging the bound Javert out of the barricade, and heard again behind the angle of the little Mondétour Lane the frightful pistol-shot. There was, probably, a hatred between this spy and this galley-slave, and one annoyed the other. Jean Valjean went to the barricade to revenge himself, he arrived late, and was probably aware that Javert was a prisoner there. Jean Valjean had killed Javert, or, at least, that seemed evident. How was it that the existence of Jean Valjean had so long elbowed that of Cosette? Who could have attached the lamb to the wolf, and, even more incomprehensible still, the wolf to the lamb? for the wolf loved the lamb, the ferocious being adored the weak being, and for nine years the angel had leant on the monster for support. The childhood and maidenhood of Cosette and her virgin growth towards life and light had been protected by this deformed devotion.

Jean Valjean had laboured on Cosette, and had to some extent formed her mind, that was incontestable. Well, what then? The workman was horrible, but the work was admirable, and GOD produces his miracles as he thinks proper. He had constructed that charming Cosette, and employed Jean Valjean on the job, and it had pleased him to choose this strange assistant. He adored Cosette, he possessed Cosette; Cosette was splendidly pure, and that was sufficient for him. Jean Valjean's personal affairs in no way concerned him, and in bending down over the fatal shadow of this wretched man he clung to his solemn declaration, *I am nothing to Cosette; ten years ago I did not know that she existed.* But in whatever circle of ideas Marius might turn, he always came back to a certain horror of Jean Valjean. He was a con-

vict, that is to say, a being who has not even a place on the social ladder, being beneath the lowest rung.

On the morrow, at night-fall, Jean Valjean tapped at the gateway of the Gillenormand mansion, and it was Basque who received him. Basque was in the yard at the appointed time, as if he had had his orders.

"Monsieur le Baron has instructed me to ask you, sir, whether you wish to go up-stairs or stay down here?"

"Stay down here," Jean Valjean replied.

Basque, who, however, was perfectly respectful in his manner, opened the door of the ground-floor room, and said, "I will go and inform her ladyship." The room which Jean Valjean entered was a damp, arched basement room, employed as a cellar at times, looking out on the street, with a flooring of red tiles, and badly lighted by an iron-barred window. The wall, covered with a yellow-ochre wash, crumbled off in large patches; at the end was a mantel-piece of paneled black wood, with a narrow shelf, and a fire was lighted in it, which indicated that Jean Valjean's reply *remain down here* had been calculated on. Two chairs were placed, one in each chimney-corner, and between the chairs was spread, in guise of carpet, an old bed-room rug, which displayed more cord than wool. The room was illumined by the flickering of the fire, and the twilight through the window. Jean Valjean was fatigued, for several days he had not eaten or slept, and he fell into one of the arm-chairs. Basque returned, placed a lighted candle on the mantel-piece, and withdrew. Jean Valjean, who was sitting with hanging head, did not notice either Basque or the candle, till all at once he started up, for Cosette was behind him: he had not seen her come in, but he felt that she was doing so. He turned round and contemplated her; she was adorably lovely. "Well, father," Cosette exclaimed, "I knew that you were singular, but I could never have expected this. What an idea! Marius told me that it was your wish to see me here."

"Yes, it is."

"I expected that answer, and I warn you that I am going to have a scene with you. Let us begin with the beginning: kiss me, father."

She offered her cheek, but Jean Valjean remained motionless.

"Things are growing serious," said Cosette. "What have I done to you? I am offended, and you must make it up with me. Come, go with me to the drawing-room. At once."

"Impossible."

Cosette here lost a little ground; she ceased to order, and began questioning.

"But why? And you choose the ugliest room in the house to see me in. It is horrible here."

"You know, Cosette—"

Jean Valjean broke off: "You know, madame, that I am peculiar, and have my fancies."

"Madame—*you* know—more novelties; what does this all mean?"

Jean Valjean gave her that heart-broken smile to which he sometimes had recourse.

"You wished to be a lady, and are one."

"Not for you, father."

"Do not call me father."

"What?"

"Call me Monsieur Jean, or Jean, if you like."

"You are no longer father? I am no longer Cosette? Monsieur Jean? Why, what does it mean? These are revolutions. What has happened? Look me in the face, if you can. And you will not live with us! and you will not accept our bed-room! What have I done to offend you! Oh, what have I done? There must be something."

"Nothing."

"In that case then?"

"All is as usual."

"Why do you change your name?"

"You have changed yours."

He smiled the same smile again, and added, "Since you are Madame Pontmercy, I may fairly be Monsieur Jean."

"I do not understand anything, and all this is idiotic. I will ask my husband's leave for you to be Monsieur Jean, and I hope that he will not consent. You cause me great sorrow, and you have no right to be naughty, for you are so good."

As he made no reply, she seized both his hands eagerly, and with an irresistible movement raising them to her face she pressed them against her neck, under her chin, which is a profound sign of affection.

"Oh," she said, "be kind to me."

He removed her hands,—

"You no longer want a father, as you have a husband."

"You are angry with me for being happy, is that it?"

Simplicity sometimes penetrates unconsciously very deep, and this question, simple for Cosette, was profound for Jean Valjean. Jean Valjean turned pale, he remained for a moment without answering, and then murmured with an indescribable accent, and speaking to himself,—

"Her happiness was the object of my life, and at present GOD may order my departure. Cosette, thou art happy, and my course is run."

"Ah! you said *thou* to me," Cosette exclaimed, and leaped on his neck.

Jean Valjean wildly strained her to his heart, for he felt as if he were almost taking her back again.

"Thank you, father," Cosette said to him.

The excitement was getting too painful for Jean Valjean; he gently withdrew himself from Cosette's arms, and took up his hat.

"Well?" said Cosette.

Jean Valjean replied: "I am going to leave you, Madame, as you will be missed."

And on the threshold he added,—

"I said to you *thou;* tell your husband that it shall not happen again. Forgive me."

Jean Valjean left Cosette stupefied by this enigmatical leave-taking.

Several weeks passed. A new life gradually seized on Cosette; the relations which marriage creates, visits, the management of the household, and pleasures, that great business. The pleasures of Cosette were not costly, they consisted in only one, being with Marius. Jean Valjean came daily. The Madame and the Monsieur Jean, however, made him different to Cosette, and the care he had himself taken to detach himself from her succeeded. She was more and more gay, and less and less affectionate, and yet she loved him dearly still, and he felt it. One day she suddenly said to him, "You were my father, you are no longer my father; you were my uncle, you are no longer my uncle; you were Monsieur Fauchelevent, and are now Jean. Who are you then? I do not like all this. If I did not know you to be so

good, I should be afraid of you." He still lived in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, as he could not resolve to remove from the quarter in which Cosette lived. At first he only stayed a few minutes with Cosette, and then went away, but by degrees he grew into the habit of making his visits longer. It might be said that he took advantage of the lengthening days; he arrived sooner and went away later. One day, the word father slipped over Cosette's lips, and a gleam of joy lit up Jean Valjean's old solemn face, but he chided her; "Say Jean."

"Ah, that is true," she replied, with a burst of laughter, "Monsieur Jean."

"That is right," he said, and he turned away that she might not see the tears in his eyes.

Jean Valjean noticed ere long that the young couple led a very close life, and was annoyed at it. Marius's economy was strict, and that word had its absolute meaning with Jean Valjean; he hazarded a question.

"Why do you not keep a carriage? A little coupé would not cost you more than five hundred francs a month, and you are rich."

"I do not know," Cosette answered.

"It is the same with Toussaint," Jean Valjean continued; "she has left, and you have engaged no one in her place. Why not?"

"Nicolette is sufficient."

"But you must want a lady's maid?"

"Have I not Marius?"

"You ought to have a house of your own, servants of your own, a carriage, and a box at the opera. Nothing is too good for you. Then why not take advantage of the fact of your being rich? Wealth adds to happiness."

Cosette made no reply. Jean Valjean's visits did not grow shorter, on the contrary, for when it is the heart that is slipping, a man does not stop on the incline. When Jean Valjean wished to prolong his visit and make the hour be forgotten, he sung the praises of Marius, he found him handsome, noble, brave, witty, eloquent, and good. Cosette added to the praise, and Jean Valjean began again. It was an inexhaustible subject, and there were volumes in the six letters composing Marius's name. In this way Jean Valjean managed to stop for a long time, for it was so sweet to see Cosette

and forget by her side. It was a dressing for his wound. It frequently happened that Basque would come and say twice,—"M. Gillenormand has sent me to remind Madame la Baronne that dinner is waiting." On those days Jean Valjean would return home very thoughtful. One day he remained longer than usual, and the next noticed there was no fire in the grate. "Stay," he thought, "no fire?"—and he gave himself this explanation—"It is very simple; we are in April, and the cold weather has passed."

"Good gracious! how cold it is here!" Cosette exclaimed as she came in.

"Oh no," said Jean Valjean.

"Then it was you who told Basque not to light a fire?"

"Yes, we shall have May here directly."

"But fires keep on till June; in this cellar there ought to be one all the year round."

"I thought it was unnecessary."

"That is just like one of your ideas," Cosette remarked.

The next day there was a fire but the two chairs were placed at the other end of the room, near the door. "What is the meaning of that?" Jean Valjean thought; he fetched the chairs and placed them in their usual place near the chimney. This rekindled fire, however, encouraged him, and he made the conversation last even longer than usual. As he rose to leave Cosette remarked to him,—

"My husband said a funny thing to me yesterday."

"What was it?"

"He said to me, 'Cosette, we have thirty thousand francs a year,—twenty-seven of yours, and three that my grandfather allows me.' I replied, 'That makes thirty;' and he continued, 'Would you have the courage to live on the three thousand?' I answered, 'Yes, on nothing, provided that it be with you;' and then I asked him, 'Why did you say that to me?' He replied, 'I merely wished to know.'"

Jean Valjean had not a word to say. Cosette probably expected some explanation from him, but he listened to her in a sullen silence. He went back to the Rue de l'Homme Armé, and was so profoundly abstracted that, instead of entering his own house, he went into the next one. It was not till he had gone up nearly two flights of stairs that he noticed his mistake, and came down again. His mind was crammed

with conjectures: it was evident that Marius entertained doubts as to the origin of the six hundred thousand francs, that he feared some impure source; he might even, who knew? have discovered that this money came from him, Jean Valjean; that he hesitated to touch this suspicious fortune, and was repugnant to use it as his own, preferring that Cosette and he should remain poor rather than be rich with dubious wealth. Moreover, Jean Valjean was beginning to feel himself shown to the door. On the following day he had a species of shock on entering the basement room; the fauteuils had disappeared, and there was not even a seat of any sort.

"Dear me, no chairs," Cosette exclaimed on entering, "where are they?"

"I told Basque to remove them. I shall only remain a few minutes to-day."

"Few or many, that is no reason for standing."

Jean Valjean had not another word to say, and Cosette shrugged her shoulders.

"Have the chairs removed! The other day you ordered the fire to be left off! How singular you are!"

"Good-bye," Jean Valjean murmured.

He did not say "Good-bye, Cosette," but he had not the strength to say "Good-bye, Madame."

He went away, crushed, for this time he had comprehended. The next day he did not come, and Cosette did not remark this till the evening.

"Dear me," she said, "Monsieur Jean did not come to-day."

She felt a slight pang at the heart, but she scarce noticed it, as she was at once distracted by a kiss from Marius. The next day he did not come either. Cosette paid no attention to this, slept at night as usual, and only thought of it when she woke; she was so happy! She very soon sent Nicolette to Monsieur Jean's to see whether he were ill, and why he had not come to see her on the previous day, and Nicolette brought back Monsieur Jean's answer. "He was not ill, but was busy, and would come soon, so soon as he could. But he was going to make a little journey, and Madame would remember that he was accustomed to do so every now and then. She need not feel at all alarmed, or trouble herself about him."

Jean Valjean, however, still went daily to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire. and gazed with longing eyes at the house

in which Cosette dwelt. But gradually his health began to decline, and he was no longer able to allow himself this gratification. One day he went down his staircase, took three steps in the street, sat down upon a post, the same one on which Gavroche had found him sitting in thought on the night of June 5th; he stayed there a few minutes, and then went up again. This was the last oscillation of the pendulum; the next day he did not leave his room; the next to that he did not leave his bed. The porter's wife, who prepared his poor meals for him, some cabbage or a few potatoes and a little bacon, looked at the brown earthenware plate and exclaimed,—

"Why, poor dear man, you ate nothing yesterday."

"Yes, I did," Jean Valjean answered.

"The plate is quite full."

"Look at the water jug: it is empty."

"That proves you have drunk, but does not prove that you have eaten."

"Well," said Jean Valjean, "suppose that I only felt hungry for water?"

"That is called thirst, and if a man does not eat at the same time it is called fever."

Jean Valjean never saw any other human creature but this good woman. During the time when he still went out he had bought at a brazier's for a few sous a small copper crucifix, which he suspended from a nail opposite his bed. A week passed thus, and Jean Valjean still remained in bed. The porter's wife said to her husband, "The old gentleman up-stairs does not get up, he does not eat, and he will not last long. He has a sorrow, and no one will get it out of my head but that his daughter has made a bad match.

One evening Jean Valjean had a difficulty in rising on his elbow; he took hold of his wrist and could not find his pulse; his breathing was short, and stopped every now and then, and he perceived that he was weaker than he had ever yet been. Then, doubtless under the pressure of some supreme pre-occupation, he made an effort, sat up, and dressed himself. He put on his old workman's clothes; for, as he no longer went out, he had returned to them and preferred them. He was compelled to pause several times while dressing himself; and the perspiration poured off his forehead, merely through the effort of putting on his jacket. He opened the valise, and took out

Cosette's clothing, which he spread on his bed. The bishop's candlesticks were at their place on the mantelpiece; he took two wax candles out of a drawer and put them up, and then, though it was broad summer daylight, he lit them. Each step he took in going from one article of furniture to another exhausted him, and he was obliged to sit down.

One of the chairs on which he sank was placed near the mirror, so fatal for him, so providential for Marius, in which he had read Cosette's reversed writing on the blotting-book. He saw himself in this mirror, and could not recognize himself. What he had on his forehead was no longer the wrinkle of age, but the mysterious mark of death. His cheeks were flaccid, the two corners of his mouth drooped as in that mask which the ancients sculptured on the tomb: he looked at space reproachfully, and he resembled one of those tragic beings who have cause to complain of some one. Night had set in, and he with difficulty dragged a table and the old easy-chair to the chimney, and laid on the table pen, ink, and paper. This done he fainted away, and when he regained his senses he was thirsty; as he could not lift the water-jar, he bent down with an effort and drank a mouthful. Then he turned to the bed, and, still seated, for he was unable to stand, he gazed at the little black dress and all those dear objects. All at once he shuddered, and felt that the cold had struck him. He leant his elbows on the table which the bishop's candlesticks illumined and took up the pen. He wiped his forehead from time to time, and his hand trembled as he wrote the few following lines:

"Cosette, I bless you. I am about to explain to you. Your husband did right in making me understand that I ought to go away; still, he was slightly in error as to what he believed, but he acted rightly. He is a worthy man, and love him dearly when I am gone from you. Monsieur Pontmercy, always love my beloved child. Cosette, this paper will be found, this is what I wish to say to you; you shall see the figures if I have the strength to remember them, but listen to me, the money is really yours, This is the whole affair; white jet comes from Norway, black jet comes from England, and black beads come from Germany. Jet is lighter, more valuable, and dearer, but imitations can be made in France as well as in Germany. You must have a small anvil two inches square, and a spirit lamp to soften the wax. The wax used to be made with resin and

smoke-black, and costs four francs the pound, but I hit on the idea of making it of shell-lac and turpentine. It only costs thirty sous, and is much better. The rings are made of violet glass fastened by means of the wax on a small black iron wire. The glass must be violet for iron ornaments, and black for gilt ornaments. Spain buys large quantities, it is the country of jet—"

Here he stopped, the pen slipped from his fingers, he burst into one of those despairing sobs which rose at times from the depths of his being; the poor man took his head between his hands and thought.

"Oh!" he exclaimed internally (lamentable cries heard by GOD alone), "it is all over. I shall never see her again; it is a smile which flashed across me. Oh, it is all over, for ever. I am all alone, my GOD! my GOD! I shall see her no more."

At this moment there was a knock at his door.

CHAPTER XXVI

THAT same evening, as Marius was leaving the dinner-table to withdraw to his study, Basque handed him a letter, saying, "The person who wrote the letter is in the anteroom." Marius took it, and it smelt of tobacco. Nothing arouses a recollection so much as a smell, and Marius recognized the tobacco. He looked at the address, *To Monsieur le Baron Pommerci, At his house.* The recognized tobacco made him recognize the hand-writing. The Jondrette garret rose again before him. Hence—strange blow of accident!—one of the two trails which he had so long sought, the one for which he had latterly made so many efforts and believed lost for ever, came to offer itself voluntarily to him. He eagerly opened the letter and read:—

"Monsieur le Baron,

"If the Supreme Being had endowed me with talents, I might have been Baron Thénard, member of the Institute (academy of cienses), but I am not so, I merely bear the same name with him, and shall be happy if this reminisence recommends me to the excelense of your kindness. The benefits with which you may honour me will be reciprocal, for I am in possession of a secret conserning an individual. This individual conserns you. I hold the secret at your disposal, as I desire

to have the honour of being huseful to you. I will give you the simple means for expeling from your honourable family this individual who has no right in it, Madam la Barronne being of high birth. The sanctuary of virtue could no longer coabit with crime without abdicating.

"I await in the anteroom the order of Monsieur le Baron.

"Respectfully."

The letter was signed "THENARD." This signature was not false, but only slightly abridged. However, the bombast and the orthography completed the revelation, the certificate of origin was perfect, and no doubt was possible. Marius's emotion was profound; and after the movement of surprise he had a movement of happiness. Let him now find the other man he sought, the man who had saved him, Marius, and he would have nothing more to desire. He opened a drawer in his bureau, took out several bank-notes, which he put into his pocket, closed the bureau again, and rang. Basque opened the door partly.

"Show the man in," said Marius.

Basque announced: "M. Thénard."

A man came in, and it was a fresh surprise for Marius, as the man he now saw was a perfect stranger to him. This man, who was old, by the way, had a large nose, his chin in his cravat, green spectacles, with a double shade of green silk over his eyes, and his hair smoothed down and flattened on his forehead over his eyebrows, like the wig of English coachmen of high life. His hair was grey. He was dressed in black from head to foot, a very seedy but clean black, and a bunch of seals, emerging from his fob, led to the supposition that he had a watch. He held an old hat in his hand, walked bent, and the curve in his back augmented the depth of his bow; and it could not but strike most at the first glance that his coat, too large, though carefully buttoned, had not been made for him.

Marius' disappointment, on seeing a different man from the one whom he expected enter, turned into disgust with the new comer. He examined him from head to foot, while the personage was giving him an exaggerated bow and asked him curtly, "What do you want?"

"Monsieur le Baron, deign to listen to me. There is in America, in a country near Panama, a village called La Joya, and this village is composed of a single house. A large square house three storeys high, built of brick dried in the sun, each

side of the square being five hundred feet long, and each storey retiring from the one under it for a distance of twelve feet, so as to leave in front of it, a terrace which runs all round the house. In the centre is an inner court, in which provisions and ammunition are stored; there are no windows, only loop-holes, no door, only ladders—ladders to mount from the ground to the first terrace, and from the first to the second, and from the second to the third, ladders to descend into the inner court; no doors to the rooms, only traps; no staircases to the apartments, only ladders. At night the trap-doors are closed, the ladders are drawn up, and blunderbusses and carbines are placed in the loop-holes; there is no way of entering; it is a house by day, a citadel by night. Eight hundred inhabitants, such is this village. Why such precautions? Because the country is dangerous, and full of anthropophagists. Then, why do people go there? Because it is a marvellous country, and gold is found there."

"What are you driving at?" Marius interrupted.

"To this, M. le Baron. I am an ex-worn-out diplomatist. I am sick of our old civilization, and wish to try the savages."

"What next? conclude."

"I should like to go and settle at La Joya. There are three of us. I have my wife and my daughter, a very lovely girl. The voyage is long and expensive, and I am short of funds."

"How does that concern me?" Marius asked.

The stranger thrust his neck out of his cravat, with a gesture peculiar to the vulture, and said, with a more affable smile than before,—

"Monsieur le Baron cannot have read my letter?"

That was almost true, and the fact is that the contents of the epistle had escaped Marius; he had seen the writing rather than read the letter, and he scarce remembered it. A new hint had just been given him, and he noticed the detail, "My wife and daughter." He fixed a penetrating glance on the stranger, a magistrate could not have done it better, but he confined himself to saying: "Be more precise."

The stranger thrust his hands into his trousers' pockets, raised his head without straightening his back-bone, but on his side scrutinizing Marius through his green spectacles.

"Very good, M, le Baron. I will be precise. I have a secret to sell you."

"Does it concern me?"

"Slightly."

"What is it?"

"Monsieur le Baron, you have in your house a robber and assassin."

Marius gave a start.

"In my house? no," he said.

The stranger imperturbably brushed his hat with his arm, and went on.

"An assassin and robber. Remark, M. le Baron, that I am not speaking here of old-forgotten facts, which might be effaced by prescription before the law; I am speaking of recent facts still unknown to justice. This man has crept into your confidence, and almost into your family, under a false name. I am going to tell you his real name, and tell it you for nothing."

"I am listening."

"His name is Jean Valjean."

"I knew it."

"I will tell, equally for nothing, who he is. He is an ex-convict."

"I know it."

Marius's cold tone, this double reply, *I know it*, and his refractory disinclination to speak, aroused some latent anger in the stranger, and he gave Marius a furious side-glance. Rapid though it was, it did not escape Marius. The stranger continued, smiling,

"I will not venture to contradict M. le Baron, but in any case you will see that I am well informed. Now, what I have to tell you is known to myself alone, and it affects the fortune of Madame la Baronne. It is an extraordinary secret, and is for sale. I offer it you first. Cheap, twenty thousand francs."

"I know that secret as I know the other," said Marius. "I repeat to you that you have nothing to tell me. I know what you want to say to me."

There was a fresh flash in the man's eye as he continued,—

"Still I must dine to-day. It is an extraordinary secret, I tell you. Monsieur, I am going to speak. I am speaking. Give me twenty francs."

Marius looked at him fixedly.

"I know your extraordinary secret, just as I knew Jean Valjean's name, and as I know yours.

"That is not difficult, M. le Baron, for I had the honour of writing it and mentioning it to you. Thénard— "

"Thénardier."

In danger the porcupine bristles, the beetle feigns death, this man began laughing. Then he flipped a grain of dust off his coat sleeve. Marius continued,—

"You are also the workman Jondrette, the actor Fabantou, the poet Genflot, the Spanish Don Alvares, and Madame Balizard. You once kept a pot-house at Montfermeil. And I tell you that you are Thénardier."

"I deny it."

"And that you are a scoundrel. Take that."

And Marius taking a bank-note from his pocket, threw it in his face.

"Five hundred francs! Monsieur le Baron!"

And the man, overwhelmed and bowing, clutched the note and examined it.

"Five hundred francs," he continued, quite dazzled.

Then suddenly exclaimed,—

"Well, be it so; let us be at our ease."

And with monkey-like dexterity, throwing back his hair, and tearing off his spectacles, he took off his face as you or I, take off our hat. His eye grew bright, the forehead, hideously wrinkled at top, became smooth, the nose sharp as a beak, and the ferocious and sagacious profile of the predacious man reappeared.

Thénardier, for it was really he, had come to bring astonishment, and it was himself who underwent it. This humiliation was paid for with five hundred francs, and he accepted it; but he was not the less stunned. He saw for the first time this Baron Pontmercy, and in spite of his disguise this Baron Pontmercy recognized him, and recognized him thoroughly. Thénardier, it will be remembered, though he had been Marius's neighbour, had never seen him, which is frequently the case in Paris; he had formerly vaguely heard his daughter speak of a very poor young man of the name of Marius who lived in the house, and he had written him, without knowing him, the letter we formerly read. No approximation between this Marius and M. le Baron Pontmercy was possible in his mind.

However, he had managed through his daughter Azelma, whom he put on the track of the married couple on February

16th, and by his own researches, to learn a good many things, and in his dark den had succeeded in seizing more than one mysterious thread. He had by sheer industry discovered, or at least by the inductive process had divined, who the man was whom he had met on a certain day in the great sewer. From the man he had easily arrived at the name, and he knew that Madame la Baronne Pontmercy was Cosette. But on that point he intended to be discreet; who Cosette was he did not know exactly himself. He certainly got a glimpse of some bastardism, and Fantine's story had always appeared to him doubtful. But what was the good of speaking? to have his silence paid? He had, or fancied he had, something better to sell than that, and according to all expectation, to go and make Baron Pontmercy without further proof the revelation, *Your wife is only a bastard*, would only have succeeded in attracting the husband's boot to the broadest part of his person. Marius was the first to break the silence.

"Thénardier, I have told you your name, and now do you wish me to tell you the secret you have come to impart to me? I have my information also. Jean Valjean, as you said, is an assassin and a robber. A robber, because he plundered a rich manufacturer, M. Madeleine, whose ruin he caused: an assassin, because he murdered Inspector Javert."

"I do not understand you, M. le Baron," said Thénardier.

"I will make you understand; listen. There was in a bailiwick of the Pas de Calais, about the year 1822, a man who had been in some trouble with the authorities, and who had rehabilitated and restored himself under the name of Monsieur Madeleine. This man had become, in the fullest extent of the term, a just man, and he made the fortune of an entire town by a trade, the manufacture of black beads. He was the foster-father of the poor, he founded hospitals, opened schools, visited the sicked, dowered girls, supported widows, adopted orphans, and was, as it were, guardian of the town. He had refused the cross, and was appointed Mayor. A liberated convict knew the secret of a penalty formerly incurred by this man; he denounced and had him arrested, and took advantage of the arrest to come to Paris and draw out of Laffitte's, I have the facts from the cashier himself, by means of a false signature, a sum of half a million and more, which belonged to M. Madeleine. The convict who robbed M. Madeleine was Jean

Valjean; as for the other fact, you can tell me no more than I know either. Jean Valjean killed Inspector Javert with a pistol-shot, and I, who am speaking to you, was present."

Thénardier gave Marius the sovereign glance of a beaten man who sets his hand again on the victory, and has regained in a minute all the ground he had lost. But the smile at once returned, for the inferior, when in presence of his superior, must keep his triumph to himself, and Thénardier confined himself to saying to Marius,—

"Monsieur le Baron, we are on the wrong track."

"What!" Marius replied, "do you dispute it? They are facts."

"The confidence with which Monsieur le Baron honours me makes it my duty to tell him so. Before all, truth and justice, and I do not like to see people accused wrongfully. Monsieur le Baron, Jean Valjean did not rob M. Madeleine, and Jean Valjean did not kill Javert. And that for two reasons."

"What are they? speak?"

"The first is this: he did not rob M. Madeleine, because Jean Valjean himself is M. Madeleine."

"What nonsense are you talking?"

"And this is the second: he did not assassinate Javert, because Javert committed suicide."

"Prove it, prove it," Marius cried wildly.

Thénardier repeated slowly, scanning his sentence after the fashion of an ancient Alexandrian,—

"Police- Agent-Javert- was-found- drowned- un- der -a- boat-at-Pont-au-Change."

"But prove it then."

Thénardier drew from his side-pocket a large grey paper parcel, which seemed to contain folded papers of various sizes.

"Monsieur le Baron, I wished to know Jean Valjean thoroughly on your behalf. I say that Jean Valjean and Madeleine are the same, and I say that Javert had no other assassin but Javert, and when I say this, I have the proofs.

While speaking, Thénardier extracted from the parcel two newspapers, yellow, faded, and tremendously saturated with tobacco. One of these two papers, broken in all the folds, and falling in square rags, seemed much older than the other.

It was a number of the *Drapeau Blanc*, for January 25th, 1823, of which the exact text was given at p. 128, estab-

lishing the identity of M. Madeleine and Jean Valjean. The other, a *Moniteur*, of June 15th, 1832, announced the suicide of Javert, adding that it was found from a verbal report made by Javert to the Prefét, that he had been made prisoner at the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and owed his life to the magnanimity of an insurgent, who, when holding him under his pistol, instead of blowing out his brains, fired in the air. Marius read; there was evidence, a certain date, irrefragable proof, for these two papers had not been printed expressly to support Thénardier's statement, and the note published in the *Moniteur* was officially communicated by the Prefecture of Police. Marius could no longer doubt, the cashier's information was false, and he was himself mistaken. Jean Valjean, suddenly growing taller, issued from the cloud, and Marius could not restrain a cry of joy.

"What, then, this poor fellow is an admirable man! all this fortune is really his! He is Madeleine, the providence of an entire town! he is Jean Valjean, the saviour of Javert! he is a hero! he is a saint!"

"He is not a saint, and he is not a hero," said Thénardier, "he is an assassin and a robber."

"Are you alluding," Marius continued, "to that wretched theft committed forty years back, and expiated as is proved from those very papers, by a whole life of repentance, self-denial, and virtue?"

"I say assassination and robbery, M. le Baron, and repeat that I am alluding to recent facts. What I have to reveal to you is perfectly unknown and unpublished, and you may perhaps find in it the source of the fortune cleverly offered by Jean Valjean to Madame la Baronne. I say skilfully, for it would not be a stupid act, by a donation of that nature, to step into an honourable house, whose comforts he would share, and at the same time hide the crime, bury his names, and create a family."

"I could interrupt you here," Marius observed, "but go on."

"Monsieur le Baron, I will tell you all, leaving the reward to your generosity. You will say to me, 'Why not apply to Jean Valjean?' I know that he has given up all his property in your favour, and I consider the combination

ingenious; he would show me his empty hands, and as I want money for my voyage to La Joya, I prefer you, who have everything, to him, who has nothing. As I am rather fatigued, permit me to take a chair."

Marius sat down, and made him a sign to do the same. Thénardier installed himself in an easy-chair, crossed his legs, threw himself into the attitude of men who are certain of what they are stating, and then began his narrative gravely:—

"Monsieur le Baron, on June 6th, 1832, about a year ago, and on the day of the riots, a man was in the great sewer of Paris, at the point where the sewers fall into the Seine between the Pont des Invalides and the Pont de Jena."

Marius hurriedly drew his chair closer to Thénardier's. Thénardier noticed this movement, and continued with the slowness of an orator who holds his hearer, and feels his adversary quivering under his words:—

"This man, forced to hide himself, for reasons, however, unconnected with politics, had selected the sewer as his domicile, and had the key of it. It was, I repeat, June 6th, and about eight in the evening the man heard a noise in the sewer; some one was walking in the darkness, and coming in his direction. As the outlet of the sewer was no great distance off, a little light which passed through enabled him to see the new-comer, and that he was carrying something on his back. He walked in a stooping posture; and what he had on his shoulder was a corpse. A flagrant case of assassination, were there ever one; as for the robbery, that is a matter of course, for no one kills a man gratis. This convict was going to throw the body into the river, and a fact worth notice is, that, before reaching the outlet, the convict was obliged to pass a frightful hole, in which he might have left the corpse; but the sewer-men who came to effect the repairs next day would have found the murdered man there, and that did not suit the assassin. Hence he preferred carrying the corpse across the slough, and his efforts must have been frightful; I do not understand how he got out of it alive."

Marius' chair came nearer, and Thénardier took advantage of it to draw a long breath; then he continued:—

"Monsieur le Baron, a sewer is not the Champ de Mars; and when two men are in it together they must meet. The domiciled man and the passer-by were compelled to bid each

other good evening, to their mutual regret The passer-by said to the domiciled man, "*You see what I have on my back. I must go out, you have the key, so give it to me.*' This convict was a man of terrible strength, and there was no chance of refusing him; still the man who held the key parleyed, solely to gain time. He examined the dead man, but could see nothing, except that he was young, well dressed, had a rich look, and was quite disfigured with blood. While talking, he managed to tear off, without the murderer perceiving it, a piece of the skirt of the victim's coat, as a means of bringing the crime home to the criminal; after which he opened the grating, allowed the man with the load on his back to go out, locked the grating again, and ran away, not feeling at all desirous to be mixed up any further in the adventure, or to be present when the assassin threw the corpse into the river. The man who carried the corpse was Jean Valjean, the one who had the key is speaking to you at this moment, and the piece of coat-skirt——."

Thénardier completed the sentence by drawing from his pocket and holding level with his eyes a ragged piece of black cloth, all covered with dark spots. Marius had risen, pale, scarce breathing, with his eye fixed on the black patch, and, without uttering a syllable, or without taking his eyes off the rag, he fell back, and, with his right hand extended behind him, felt for the key of a wall-cupboard near the mantel-piece. He found this key, opened the cupboard, and thrust his hand into it without once taking his eyes off the rag which Thénardier displayed. In the mean while Thénardier continued,—

"Monsieur le Baron, I have the strongest grounds for believing that the assassinated young man was a wealthy foreigner, drawn by Jean Valjean into a trap, and carrying an enormous sum about him."

"I was the young man, and here is the coat!" cried Marius, as he threw on the floor an old blood-stained surtout. Then, taking the patch from Thénardier's hands, he bent over the coat and put it in its place in the skirt; the rent fitted exactly, and the fragment completed the coat. Thénardier was petrified, and thought, "I'm sold." Marius drew himself up, shuddering, desperate, and radiant; he felt in his pocket, and walking furiously towards Thénardier, thrust almost into his face his hand full of five hundred and thousand franc notes.

"You are an infamous wretch! a calumniator, and a villain! You came to accuse that man, and you have justified him. And it is you who are the robber! the assassin! I saw you, Thénardier Jondrette, at that den on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. I know enough about you to send you to the galleys, and even further if I liked. There are a thousand francs, ruffian that you are!"

And he threw a thousand-franc note at Thénardier.

"Ah, Jondrette—Thénardier, vile scoundrel, let this serve you as a lesson, you hawker of secrets, you dealer in mysteries, you searcher in the darkness, villain, take these five hundred francs, and be off. Waterloo protects you."

"Waterloo!" Thénardier growled, as he pocketed the five hundred francs.

"Yes, assassin! you saved there the life of a colonel."

"A general!" Thénardier said, raising his head.

"A colonel," Marius repeated furiously, "I would not give a farthing for a general. And you come here to commit an infamy! I tell you that you have committed every crime! Begone! Ah, monster! here are three thousand francs more. You will start to-morrow for America with your daughter, for your wife is dead, you abominable liar! I will watch over your departure, bandit, and at the moment when you set sail, pay you twenty thousand francs. Go and get hanged elsewhere."

"Monsieur le Baron," Thénardier answered, bowing to the ground, "accept my eternal gratitude."

And Thénardier left the room, understanding nothing of all this, but stupefied and ravished by this sweet crushing under bags of gold, and this lightning flashing over his head in the shape of bank-notes. Two days after the events we have just recorded he started for America, under a false name, with his daughter Azelma, and provided with an order on a New York banker, for twenty thousand francs. The moral misery of Thénardier, the spoiled bourgeois, was irremediable, and he was in America what he had been in Europe. With Marius's money he turned slave-dealer.

So soon as Thénardier had departed, Marius ran into the garden where Cosette was still walking.

"Cosette, Cosette," he cried, "come quickly, let us be off. Basque, a hackney-coach. Cosette, come! oh heavens! it was he who saved my life! let us not lose a minute!

Cosette thought him mad, and obeyed. He could not breathe, and laid his hand on his heart to check its beating. "Oh, Cosette," he said, "I am a scoundrel." Marius was amazed, for an extraordinary virtue appeared to him, supreme and gentle, and humble in its immensity, and the convict was transfigured. In an instant the hackney-coach was at the gate. Marius helped Cosette in, and followed her.

"Driver," he cried, "No. 7, Rue de l'Homme Armé."

"Oh, how glad I am," said Cosette, "we are going to see him."

"Your father, Cosette! your father more than ever. Cosette, I see it all. You told me that you never received the letter I sent you by Gavroche. It must have fallen into his hands, and he came to the barricade to save me. He drew me out of that gulf to give me to you; he carried me on his back through that frightful sewer. Just imagine that there was a horrible pit, in which a man could be drowned a hundred times, drowned in mud, Cosette; and he carried me through it. We are going to bring him back with us, and whether he is willing or not he shall never leave us again. I only hope we shall find him! I will spend the rest of my life in revering him. Yes, it must have been so, Cosette, and Gavroche must have given him my letter. That explains everything."

The hackney-coach soon reached the Rue de l'Homme Armé. At the knock he heard at his door Jean Valjean turned round.

"Come in," he said feebly.

The door opened, and Cosette and Marius appeared. Cosette rushed into the room. Marius remained on the threshold, leaning against the door-post.

"Cosette!" said Jean Valjean, and he sat up in his chair, with his arms outstretched and opened, haggard, livid, and sinister, but with an immense joy in his eyes. Cosette, suffocated with emotion, fell on Jean Valjean's breast.

"Father," she said.

Jean Valjean, utterly overcome, stammered, "Cosette! she—you—Madame! it is you! oh, my GOD!"

Marius, drooping his eyelids to keep his tears from flowing, advanced a step, and muttered between his lips, which were convulsively clenched to stop his sobs, "Father!"

"And you, too, you forgive me," said Jean Valjean.

Marius could not find a word to say, and Jean Valjean

added, "Thank you." Cosette took off her shawl, and threw her bonnet on the bed, and sitting down on the old man's knees, she parted his grey hair with an adorable movement, and kissed his forehead. Jean Valjean, who was wandering, let her do so.

"How foolish a man can be!" he said. "I fancied that I should not see her again. Just imagine, Monsieur Pontmercy, that at the very moment when you came in I was saying, 'It is all over.' There is her little dress. 'I am a wretched man, I shall not see Cosette again,' I was saying at the very moment when you were coming up the stairs. But I counted without the Bon Dieu. Ah! blessed be GOD! I see her again. Do you know, Cosette, that your husband is very handsome? Monsieur Pontmercy, let me call her Cosette, it will not be for long."

And Cosette replied: "How unkind to have left us like that! where have you been to? why were you away so long? I sent Nicolette, and the answer always was, 'He has not returned.' Oh, naughty papa, he has been ill, and we did not know it. Here, Marius, feel how cold his hand is!

"So you are here! so you forgive me, Monsieur Pontmercy?" Jean Valjean repeated.

At this remark, all that was swelling in Marius's heart found a vent, and he burst forth,—

"Do you hear, Cosette? he asks my pardon. And do you know what he did for me, Cosette? He saved my life, he did more, he gave you to me, and after saving me, and after giving you to me, Cosette, what did he do for himself? He sacrificed himself. And to me, who am so ungrateful, so forgetful, and so guilty, he says, 'Thank you!' Cosette, my whole life spent at this man's feet would be too little. That barricade, that sewer, that furnace, that pit, he went through them all for me and for you, Cosette! This man possesses every courage, every virtue, every heroism, and every holiness, and he is an angel, Cosette."

"Stop, stop!" Jean Valjean said in a whisper, "why talk in that way?"

"But why did you not tell me of it? exclaimed Marius, with a passion in which was veneration. "You save people's lives, and conceal the fact from them! You do more; under the pretext of unmasking yourself, you calumniate yourself."

"I told the truth," Jean Valjean replied.

"No," Marius retorted, "the truth is the whole truth, and you did not tell that. You were Monsieur Madeleine, why not tell me so? You saved Javert, why not tell me so? I owed you life, why not tell me so?"

"Because I thought like you, and found that you were right. It was necessary that I should leave you. Had you known of the sewer, you would have compelled me to remain with you, and hence I held my tongue."

Marius broke out, "Do you fancy that you are going to remain here? We mean to take you back with us. Oh! good heaven! when I think that I only learnt all this by accident! You shall not spend another day in this frightful house, so do not fancy you will be here to-morrow."

"To-morrow," said Jean Valjean, "I shall be no longer here, but I shall not be at your house."

"What do you mean?" Marius asked. "Oh! no, we shall not let you travel any more; you shall not leave us again, for you belong to us, and we will not let you go."

"This time it is for good," Cosette added, "we have a carriage below, and I mean to carry you off; if necessary, I shall employ force."

And, laughing, she feigned to raise the old man in her arms.

"Your room is still all ready in our house," she went on. "If you only knew how pretty the garden is just at present. You shall eat my strawberries, for it is I who water them. And no more Madame, and no more Monsieur Jean, for we live in a Republic, do we not, Marius? You will come with us; how pleased grandfather will be! You will have your bed in the garden, you will cultivate it, and we will see whether your strawberries are as fine as mine. And, then, I will do all you wish, and you will obey me."

Jean Valjean listened without hearing; he heard the music of her voice rather than the meaning of her words, and one of those heavy tears, which are the black pearls of the soul, slowly collected in his eye. He murmured,—

"The proof that GOD is good is that she is here. It is true it would be charming to live together. I should walk about with Cosette. We should each cultivate a little bed, she would give me her strawberries to eat, and I would let her pick my roses. It would be delicious, but—"

He broke off, and said gently, "It is a pity."

Cosette took both the old man's hands in hers.

"Good Heaven!" she said, "your hands have grown colder. Can you be ill? are you suffering?"

"I—no," Jean Valjean replied, "I am quite well. It is only—" He stopped.

"Only what?"

"I am going to die directly."

Marius and Cosette shuddered.

"Die!" Marius exclaimed.

"Yes, but that is nothing," said Jean Valjean.

He breathed, smiled, and added,—

"Cosette, you were talking to me, go on, speak again, that I may hear your voice."

Marius, who was petrified, looked at the old man, and Cosette uttered a piercing shriek.

"Father, father, you will live! I insist on your living."

Jean Valjean raised his head to her, with adoration.

"Oh yes, forbid me dying. Who knows? Perhaps, I shall obey. I was on the road to death when you arrived, but that stopped me. I fancied I was recovering."

"You are full of strength and life," Marius exclaimed, "can you suppose that a man dies like that? You have known grief, but you shall know no more. It is I who ask pardon of you, and on my knees! We will take you with us, and shall have henceforth but one thought, your happiness!"

Jean Valjean continued to smile.

"Even if you were to take me home with you, Monsieur Pontmercy, would that prevent me being what I am? No. GOD has thought the same as you and I, and He does not alter His opinion. It is better for me to be gone. Come, be reasonable, nothing is possible now, and I fully feel that all is over. How kind your husband is, Cosette! You are much better with him than with me!"

There was a noise at the door; it was the physician come to pay his visit.

Marius went up to the physician, and addressed but one word to him, "Sir?"—but in the manner of pronouncing it there was a whole question. The physician answered the question by an expressive glance.

There was a silence, and every chest was oppressed. Jean

Valjean turned to Cosette, and began contemplating, as if he wished to take the glance with him into eternity. The reflection of her sweet countenance illumined his pale face, for the sepulchre may have its brilliancy. The physician felt his pulse.

"Ah, it was you that he wanted," he said, looking at Marius and Cosette.

And bending down to Marius's ear, he whispered,—"Too late."

Jean Valjean, almost without ceasing to regard Cosette, looked at Marius and the physician with serenity, and the scarcely articulated words could be heard pass his lips:

"It is nothing to die, but it is frightful not to live."

All at once he rose—such return of strength is at times a sequel of the death-agony. He walked with a firm step to the wall, thrust aside Marius and the doctor, who wished to help him, detached from the wall a small copper crucifix hanging on it, returned to his seat with all the vigour of full health, and said, as he laid the crucifix on the table,—

"There is the great Martyr."

Then his chest sank in, his head vacillated, as if the intoxication of the tomb were seizing on him. Cosette supported his shoulders and sobbed, and tried to speak to him, but was unable to do so. Jean Valjean, after this partial syncope, rallied, shook his forehead as if to make the darkness fall off it, and became again almost quite livid. He caught hold of Cosette's sleeve and kissed it.

"He is recovering, doctor," Marius cried.

"You are both good," said Jean Valjean. "It causes me sorrow, Monsieur Pontmercy, that you have refused to touch that money, but it is really your wife's. I will explain to you, my children, and that is why I am so glad to see you. Black jet comes from England, and white jet from Norway. I invented the substitution of rolled-up snaps for welded snaps in bracelets; they are prettier, better, and not so dear. You can understand what money can be earned by it; so Cosette's fortune is really hers."

The porter's wife had come up, and was peeping through the open door; the physician sent her off, but could not prevent the zealous old woman shouting to the dying man before she went.

"Will you have a priest?"

"I have one," Jean Valjean answered.

And he seemed to point with his finger to a spot over his head, where he might have been fancied to see some one; it is probable, in truth, that the Bishop was present at this death-scene. Cosette gently placed a pillow behind Jean Valjean's loins, and he continued,—

"Monsieur Pontmercy, have no fears, I conjure you. The six hundred thousand francs are really Cosette's! We had succeeded in making those beads famously, and we competed with what is called Berlin jewelry."

Cosette and Marius stood before him hand in hand, dumb through agony, not knowing what to say to death, despairing and trembling. With each moment Jean Valjean declined nearer to the dark horizon. His breathing had become intermittent, and a slight rattle impeded it. The light of the unknown world was already visible in his eyeballs. His face grew livid, and at the same time smiling. He made Cosette a sign to approach, and then Marius; it was evidently the last minute of the last hour, and he began speaking to them in so faint a voice that it seemed to come from a distance, and it was as if there were a wall between them and him.

"Come hither, both of you, I love you dearly. You too love me, my Cosette; I felt certain that you always had a fondness for the poor old man. How kind it was of you to place that pillow under my loins! You will weep for me a little, will you not? But not too much, for I do not wish you to feel real sorrow. You must have a carriage, now and then a box at the opera, handsome, ball-dresses, my Cosette, and give good dinners to your friends, and be very happy. I was writing just now to Cosette. She will find my letter. To her I leave the two candlesticks on the mantel-piece. They are silver, but to me they are made of gold, of diamonds; they change the candles placed in them into consecrated tapers. I know not whether the man who gave them to me is satisfied with me above, but I have done what I could. My children, you will not forget that I am a poor man, you will have me buried in some corner with a stone to mark the spot. No name on the stone. If Cosette comes to see it now and then, it will cause me pleasure. And you, too, Monsieur Pontmercy. I must confess to you that I did not always like you, and I ask your forgiveness. Now, she and you are only one for me. I

am very grateful to you, for I feel that you render Cosette happy. If you only knew, Monsieur Pontmercy, her pretty pink cheeks were my joy, and when I saw her at all pale, I was miserable. There is in the chest of drawers a five hundred franc note, I have not touched it, it is for the poor, Cosette. Do you see your little dress there on the bed? do you recognize it? And yet it was only ten years ago! How time passes! We have been very happy, and it is all over. Cosette, do you remember Montfermeil? You were in the wood and very frightened; do you remember when I took the bucket-handle? It was the first time I touched your pretty little hand. It was so cold. Ah, you had red hands in those days, Miss, but now they are very white. And the large doll? do you remember? You christened it Catherine, and were sorry that you did not take it with you to the convent. How many times you have made me laugh, my sweet angel! You were so merry when a little girl. You used to play. You would put cherries in your ears. All these are things of the past. Those Thénardiers were very wicked, but we must forgive them. Cosette the moment has arrived to tell you your mother's name. It was Fantine. Remember this name—Fantine. Fall on your knees every time that you pronounce it. She suffered terribly. She loved you dearly. She knew as much misery as you have known happiness. Such are the distributions of GOD. He is above. I am going away, my children, Love each other dearly and always. Ah, my Cosette, it is not my fault that I did not see you every day, for it broke my heart. I went as far as the corner of the street, and must have produced a funny effect on the people who saw me pass, for I was like a madman, and even went out without my hat. My children, I can no longer see very clearly. I had several things to say to you, but no matter. Think of me a little. I know not what is the matter with me, but I see light. Come hither. I die happy. Let me lay my hands on your beloved heads."

Cosette and Marius fell on their knees, heart-broken and choked with sobs, each under one of Jean Valjean's hands. These august hands did not move again. He had fallen back, and the light from the two candles illumined him; his white face looked up to heaven, and he let Cosette and Marius cover his hands with kisses,—for he was dead. The

night was starless and intensely dark ; doubtless some immense angel was standing in the gloom, with outstretched wings, waiting for the soul.

There is at the cemetery of Pére Lachaise, in the vicinity of the poor side, far from the elegant quarter of this city of sepulchres, in a deserted corner near an old wall, under a yew, up which bind-weed climbs, and amid couch-grass and moss,—a tombstone. This stone is no more exempt than the others from the results of time, from mildew, lichen, and the deposits of birds. Water turns it green, and the atmosphere blackens it. It is not in the vicinity of any path, and people do not care to visit that part, because the grass is tall and they get their feet wet. When there is a little sunshine the lizards disport on it ; there is all around a rustling of wild oats, and in spring linnets sing on the trees.

This tombstone is quite bare. In cutting it, no further care was taken than to make the stone long enough and narrow enough to cover a man.

No name can be read on it.

Many, many years ago, however, a hand wrote on it in pencil these lines, which became almost illegible through rain and dust, and which are probably effaced at the present day :

Il dort. Quoique le sort fût pour lui bien étrange.
Il vivait. Il mourut quand il n'eut pas son ange ;
La chose simplement d'elle-même arriva,
Comme la nuit se fait lorsque le jour s'en va.

THE END.

Butler & Tanner, The Selwood Printing Works, Frome, and London.



